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ABSTRACT

Educational interests of women aged 60 and over were studied, and a correlation between the respondents' ages, educational levels, marital status, as well as the number and types of educational topics they chose was investigated. The subjects' preferences as to selected program design questions were also identified. One hundred current members of a voluntary organization, the Minneapolis YWCA, completed a self-administered questionnaire. The typical respondent was Caucasian, aged 60 to 69, and had completed some college. They ranked the 13 categories of 148 top educational topics in the following order: financial security, health and physical fitness, art, personal development, life-coping skills, spirituality, the world we live in, medical concerns, household management, consumer competence, music, hobbies, and career-related topics. An analysis of the variance test found a significant difference in the interests among respondents when grouped into three age categories. The difference in the number of activities of interest was not significant for educational level groups. No significant difference existed in the number of items checked among respondents in three marital status groups. The majority preferred (1) classes with people of mixed ages, (2) fall and spring programs, (3) weekday and morning offerings, and (4) classes and lectures. (The questionnaire, some data, and comments are appended.) (YLB)

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AN ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF WOMEN OVER 60

A Plan B Paper

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School

University of Minnesota

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Education

By

Shirley De Jong

May, 1983

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Older adults constitute a growing segment of the American population. According to U.S. Census projections for 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1977), about 16 percent of the American population is 60 years of age or older. That is approximately 36 million people. Of that figure, 15 million or 42 percent are male and 20.6 million or 58 percent are female. This is a significant proportion of the population, and it is projected that it will grow and peak in the early twenty-first century (Blake and Peterson, 1979). With increased advances in medical technology, older adults as a group will remain healthier longer, and fewer will be handicapped by chronic diseases.

This increasing potential for a longer, more active life, along with the trend for early retirement, the increase of leisure time, and the need to cope with a rapidly changing society, makes it necessary for older adults to learn how to cope with these and other changes. These factors have implications for lifelong learning and continuing education. Eklund makes a plea for effective continuing education for older adults in the following way:

> "...Only through continuing education, made readily available, generously flexible, effectively designed, and vigorously administered can the problems of responsible adulthood...be even partially solved. The illusion of education being 'completed' at some early phase of life is no longer tenable. Education must be seen as lifelong and life-wide to be pursued throughout adulthood..." (Eklund, 1969, p. 343).

Bernice Neugarten (1974) has noted that in the future the young-old group (i.e., persons 50-75 years of age) will likely want a "wide range of options and opportunities, both for self-enhancement and community participation." She says that the trend has begun and that "more middle-aged and older people are returning to education, some because of obsolescence of work skills and others for recreation and self fulfillment" (Neugarten, 1974, p. 191).

Houle (cited in Cross and Florio, 1978, p. 25) also refers to education for the young-old and the old-old and states:

> "In the past education for the elderly has been viewed as an activity which, like needlework or croquet, was a pleasant but nonessential way of filling some of the abundant leisure time of the aged. As a contrast, I suggest that education throughout adulthood, but particularly education for the young-old and the old-old, can yield specific and highly important returns to the individual and to society."

He suggests that "episodes of learning, with their individual challenges and accomplishments, might well offer to old people the task orientation which is too often missing from much of their activity" (Cross and Florio, 1978, p. 25).

London (1970) states that older adults are seldom provided with resources necessary for coping with changing societal complexities. Instead, he says, "we tend to place them in 'playpens' by providing recreation while doing almost nothing to furnish them with the means to keep mentally alert."

Londoner (1971) also challenges the notion that older adults need only recreational and/or leisure programs. He observes:

> "On the contrary, the challenge of old age is the challenge of learning new ways of living. Educational programs for older adults must be developed to help them acquire new competencies, enabling them to meet the new demands that emerge as a result of the narrowing of their physical and social environments" (Londoner, 1971).

Many of these needs of older adults such as learning a new vocation, keeping mentally active, and developing avocational interests can be met directly through educational programs according to Hendrickson and Barnes (1967).

Knowles (1980) observes that educators who have had spectacular results have assumed that the elderly will respond to educational programs that have been designed for them, and that older people are able to develop new interests and are healthier if they do.

Despite the increasing numbers of older adults, the planning of educational programs for older adults has not kept pace with the changes confronting the older population. Hiemstra (1972) concluded from his study of needs and interests of older people that "Adult educators must consider the aged as a special clientele with special needs and interests." He found that older people have particular needs and interests which should be examined in order to plan effective educational programs. He notes that additional research and thought is required to better understand the findings and their applicability to other older adults in different settings.

Riley agrees and states that "There can also be found considerable discussion in relation to older people's preferences for program or course contents. The education needed or desired by the elderly varies

from individual to individual" (Riley, 1969, p. 112).

Thus, various adult educators have concluded that information is lacking regarding the interests of older adults. What is needed is a realistic picture of the older population which can serve as a basis for planning educational programs to serve both the young-old and old-old. Information regarding the interests of older adults could be used in developing educational programs.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to secure an understanding of women age 60 and over as to their educational interests. This was pursued by seeking information about the following questions:

1. What specific topics are older women interested in learning more about?
2. Is there a correlation between the respondents' age, educational level, and marital status and the number and types of educational topics they choose?

A secondary purpose was to find out the subjects' preferences as to selected program design questions (e.g., time of offering, course content and method, and learning with people of their own age or in mixed age groups).

Theoretical Background of the Study

Needs assessment is an initial stage in the process of determining goals or objectives of an educational program. A situation is studied

to determine the factors that are desired or should be changed. In adult education, the factors that are desired or should be changed are usually changes in knowledge, skill and attitudes of one or more adult learners.

The focus of this needs assessment was to obtain information about the perceived interests of older women. Educators such as Houle (1972), Tyler (1949), and Knowles (1980) consider the learner as an important source of information for determining the objectives of educational programs.

Tyler (1949) feels that consideration of only suggestions from the subject-matter experts or problems or expectations from contemporary society without considering the learner's interests or needs results in less appropriate or desirable objectives. Tyler argues for using studies of student interests as a basis for program objectives. It is assumed that he or she knows his or her interests.

Houle (1972) speaks of the need for the educational planner to fit programs into the life patterns of the learner, and to adapt to the learner's needs and situation. It is important to start where the learner is--the learning must have meaning to the student.

Knowles says it is important to involve the learner in the planning and implementation of programs. Knowles (1980, p. 96) states:

> "The very act of asking individuals to state their preferences involves them in the program planning process, gives them a sense of influencing decisions that affect them, and makes them feel a part of a mutual undertaking. From this point of view, one might say that program promotion starts with involving potential participants in interest assessment."

As noted earlier, Hiemstra (1972) found in his study of needs and interests of older adults that older people do have particular needs and interests which should be examined in order to plan educational programs for them.

Methodology

Data collected by the investigator between May and July of 1982 were used to determine the educational interests of older women who were members of the Minneapolis (Minnesota) Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). One of the YWCA's main objectives for 1982-1983 was to better understand its older adult population and plan effective programs to meet their specific needs. The YWCA's mission statement is: "The mission of the YWCA is the empowerment of women, girls, and third world persons, and since the population of women over 60 is growing rapidly there has been a decision to develop programs to serve this target population" (Mission Statement of the YWCA of the U.S.A.).

A self-administered questionnaire was developed as the research tool to collect data about the respondents' interest in 148 educational program topics. In constructing the instrument, the investigator drew upon the adult education literature, studies of needs and interests of older adults, and the expertise of a faculty member in adult education and two professionals working with older adult programs at the University of Minnesota.

This questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 200 women out of the 383 current members of the YWCA who were 60 years of age or more.

The participants were initially contacted by a letter which explained the study and requested their help in providing information regarding their educational interests. The respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire in the YWCA offices, if possible. For those who could not or did not respond to the request, questionnaires were mailed to their home addresses. A follow-up reminder letter and a telephone follow-up was used to contact people who did not respond to the questionnaire.

Results of the survey were analyzed by computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences at the University of Minnesota. Frequenceis were tabulated for each item. Analysis of variance tests were made to test the relationship between the extent of interest in program topics and the respondents' age, marital status and educational level. Pearson correlation coefficients tests were also made to test the relationship between a person's interest in program topics in each category with all other categories.

Significance of the Study

This study has implications for educational program planners working with older adults, especially women 60 years of age and older, in YWCA's and other organizations of that nature because it provides data about the interests of older women in continued learning. In addition, information was obtained that would be helpful in making decisions about designing and implementing the program.

Theoretically, the study data contribute to our understanding of the differences among three age groups in their extent and preferred areas

of learning. In addition, the relationship between two other demographic variables (marital status and educational level) and amount of interest in further learning were explored.

Organization of the Paper

The background of the problem and the purpose of the study have been described in Chapter I. A review of the literature is presented in Chapter II. This includes theory and research findings pertaining to older adult learners, educational interests of older adults, needs assessment. Chapter III contains the study design and procedures, and Chapter IV includes the presentation and analysis of the data. Chapter V provides a summary of the study and implications derived from the data.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Three areas of the literature pertaining to educational interests of older women were examined. The literature search focused on (1) participation of older adults in continuing education, (2) educational interests of older adults, and (3) needs assessment.

Participation and Older Adult Learners

Extent of Participation

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the participation of adult learners in educational activities. They show that the typical participant tends to be white, female, and have higher educational attainment than the older nonparticipant (Heisel and Anderson, 1981). Cross' study (1979), for example, found that younger adults, whites, those with higher educational levels, those with higher incomes, those fully employed, and those who live in metropolitan areas were more active in education than their older counterparts. Johnstone and Rivera (1965) found the typical participant to be white, married, employed in a white collar job, earning an above average income, residents of a metropolitan area, and better educated than the national mean; they found that older adults were underrepresented in their participants. Louis Harris and Associates (1975) indicate only a small number of older people currently participating in adult education activities. They found approximately two percent of all individuals 65 and older are enrolled in adult education activities.

In general, older adults participate less than younger adults; especially low levels of participation are reported by individuals 60 and older. Hiemstra (1978) found that participation of men and women 55 and older in classroom learning situations under the direction of an adult educator was reported by only 17 percent of the older adult respondents. Tuckman (1955) reported that consumers of adult education programs have been primarily men and women below the age of 40. McClusky (1974) found that 4.5 percent of individuals aged 55-64 years of age and 1.6 percent of people aged 65 and older participated in adult education programs.

According to Peterson (1981a), older adults are becoming increasingly visible in educational settings. Programs designed specifically for them are growing in number and, as the older population increases, he predicts that continuing growth in enrollments should result.

Data collected by NCES (1978) show a sizable rise in the number of older adults taking part in some form of organized adult education from 1969 to 1975. Despite this increase in numbers, those over 60 are still underrepresented in continuing education; their participation rate during 1969-1975 merely reached 2.8 percent in contrast to an overall rate of 11.6 percent for the adult population. While the aged, in general, seem to have less opportunity for lifelong education than the young, those older adults with lower education and income who are very old, and especially older black men and women, seem to have less access to education than the rest of the elderly population (NCES, 1978).

Providers of Continuing Education for Older Adults

Peterson (1981a) observes that the enrollment of older adults in continuing education is well distributed among sponsors, with churches providing most of the education to older adults, colleges and universities second, and adult education schools and correspondence programs third. These data are consistent with those of Johnstone and Rivera (1965), who found that older adults are much more likely to study religion than other age groups and that most of their religious study took place in churches, synagogues, and other religious facilities. Peterson (1981a) also notes that the view that learning and education are necessary and must continue across the life span has supported the development of course work for persons of all ages by community colleges, voluntary agencies, membership organizations, business and industry, proprietary schools, the common school system, universities, colleges, and government programs. However, Ralston (1981) found that there was an incongruence between educational needs and activities of the respondents and the educational offerings of senior center programs. Eklund (1969), London (1970), and Peterson (1976) also argue that there may be a gap between the educational needs of older adults and offerings of senior center programs.

Age and Continuing Education

Anderson and Darkenwald (1979) report age as a key variable in relation to the rate of participation of older adults, type of course preferred, and reasons for taking the course. Participation was highest for the 60-64 age group and dropped sharply thereafter. Heisel and

Anderson (1981) also report that participants, in comparison to non-participants over 60, tend to exhibit higher levels of educational attainment and income and are more likely to be white and female. They found that "the young-old are more likely to participate than the old-old, but participation by those who are at least 70 is by no means negligible."

Cross (1979) analyzed 20 state and national studies concerning age and adult education participation; she concluded that no more than 5 to 10 percent of those 55 and older participated in continuing education activities. Johnstone and Rivera (1965) found 9 percent of those 55 and older involved in continuing education activities. Peterson (1981a) compared adult education participation by age groups and showed that after age 30, each successive cohort is less likely to be involved in continuing education activities.

Educational Level

The level of formal education is generally accepted to be the most important predictor of participation in adult eduction. At every age, income and occuptational level, those individuals who had spent more years in school were more likely to participate in continuing education activities. According to Peterson (1981a) this variable overshadows all other determinants of participation and can be used as a major consideration in identifying potential audiences.

According to Peterson (1981a), the following studies indicate an educational level higher than the median for the older population, especially when combined with some college experience, is associated with

greater participation: Graney and Hayes (1976), March et al. (1977), Bynum et al. (1978), Hooper and March (1978), and Fisher (1979). Louis Harris and Associates (1975) found that seven percent of individuals over 65 who are college graduates are enrolled in adult education activities compared to only one percent for those without a high school diploma. Goodrow (1975) found that individuals 65 to 85 years of age with a median level of 10.6 years of formal schooling were not interested in taking advantage of available educational facilities. However, Heisel and Anderson (1981) report that older adults participate much less than other age groups in educational acitivities; they state that the elderly population is at an educational disadvantage since its educational attainment is below that of adults in general.

According to Havighurst (1976), the educational activity of adults, and especially of older people, will increase. Since the level of formal schooling has been found to be more closely related to participation in adult education than any other socioeconomic factor, that level--if present trends continue--will increase dramatically. This is because people are now getting more formal education in their youth and thus seem to be predisposed to continue in the pursuit of lifelong learning.

In Johnstone and Rivera's (1965) analysis of differences among adults in their extent of participation, age accounted for nearly one-third of the variance, while education accounted for two-thirds. However, this may be more a function of the age cohort's school history than a true age variable; older people currently have less formal education than younger people. The 1974 Bureau of the Census (U.S. Bureau of

the Census, 1976) reports that for all presons over the age of 75, the median school years completed were 8.6 while those 65 to 74 had completed 9.4 years and persons between the ages of 25 and 64 have completed approximately 12.5 years.

Peterson (1981b) states it is clear that the current cohort of older adults is undereducated when compared to all other adults, and this undoubtedly affects the participatory behavior of older persons. Thus, the lower participation rates of older people may be caused by their level of formal education rather than their age; as the level of formal education rises with each succeeding generation, participation in adult and continuing education by persons over the age of 63 may also rise.

Knox (1977) points out that adults who have previously participated in courses after high school are more likely to enroll in programs than those who have not. Other studies (Birren and Woodruff, 1973; Carnegie Commission, 1973; Wood and Trachtenberg, 1976) show that the data lend considerable credence to the contention that as larger proportions of the population have experience with higher education in youth, larger proportions will seek university level educational experiences in old age.

Anderson and Darkenwald (1979), in a major re-analysis of the 1975 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data, employed multiple regression techniques in an effort to identify the best predictors of participation among adults 60 and older. They found that educational attainment was the most powerful predictor of participation of all the variables, followed closely by employment in the human services sector;

the standard sociodemographic variables, however, were not effective predictors of participation.

Gender

Bynum et al. (1978) and Hooper and March (1978) reported significantly more older women than men participated in continuing education activities, more than the proportion of females in the older population would warrant. However, Marcus (1978) and Johnstone and Rivera (1965) found women participated in the same proportion as their representation in the older population.

Other Personal Characteristics

Other characteristics besides age, education level, and gender have been examined in terms of impact on extent of participation. Hooper and March (1978) indicate a greater activity among higher participants in community organizations and agencies; March et al. (1977) indicate older adults who spend a greater amount of time reading are more likely to participate; March et al. (1977) and March (1978) indicate gregariousness as a characteristic of older adults which predispose them to participate. Ownership of a home is suggested by March et al. (1977) and Hooper and March (1978) as an important correlate of participation. Other studies point to higher income (Bynum et al., 1978), being married (Hooper and March, 1978), and perceived better health and early retirement (Bynum et al., 1978) as associated with high participation.

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) further found that people are likely to have their first exposure to adult education before the age of 30, and

those persons who enrolled in their first course after they reached the age of 60 comprised only one percent of the sample.

A study conducted by Robinson (1972) found that current older adult participants were more likely than others to have participated in adult education activities ten years earlier; they were also likely to believe that their most admired friends participated in adult eduction activities.

Cross (1979), Peterson (1981a), and Heisel and Anderson (1981) have identified personal variables inversely related to educational participation. Factors such as poor health, lack of transportation, insecurity in a learing environment, lack of interest in new knowledge, and unfamiliarity with available offerings were cited by Peterson (1981a). Peterson (1981a) also observed that because adult education was not widely available in previous decades and because their involvement with full-time schooling was less, many individuals in the current older cohort did not have the opportunity or inclination to begin their adult education career early and were progressively less likely to begin attendence with each succeeding decade.

Gerads (1981), in her study of the relationship between personality type and educational participation, states that "an understanding of personality type theory is potentially valuable in designing education programs and appealing to the motivations of older adults to participate in them." She found that there was an indication that extroverted elderly (80 percent of her study) have a tendency to participate more in educational activities. Extroverted type individuals are more

interested in the outer world--their environment, they are more sociable, and feel comfortable in large groups. She also found that intuitive type persons--individuals who are interested in changing things--have a natural inclination to be creative and thrive on ideas--were also high participants in education (25 percent in her study).

Motivational Considerations

Older adults participate in continuing education activities for a variety of reasons. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) report that old people's reasons for learning can be traced to adapting to a new set of life circumstances. The society we are living in with its rapid changes, the complexity of urban life, the developmental changes in the indiviudal, increases in leisure time, and technological advances in health and medicine are leading to what has been called a "learning society." According to Peterson (1981b), these factors are motivating more and more older adults to pursue educational endeavors.

In the Harris study (1975), older adults took courses for a variety of reasons, but the expansion of general knowledge was the predominant motivating force. Those surveyed also reported wanting to use their time well and to be with others in a stimulating environment. From her study, Cross (1979) concluded that the primary motivations for older adult participation were pleasure, personal satisfaction, and meeting other people. Cross states that this indicates that education has not been viewed as a way to solve problems but, as Birren and Woodruff (1973) also noted, education has been a means of enriching one's life as well as maintaining social integration through a pleasurable group

experience.

Fisher (cited in Peterson, 1981b) found social interaction to be the most important motivating factor for participation in his sample of older adult learners. Marcus (1978) suggests that older adults who have high income and status are more likely to engage in education, not to meet specific needs but to continue their personal growth and to have an enjoyable experience. Anderson and Darkenwald (1979) report that proportionately many more among those 60-64 years of age take courses because of their current job, and many more of the 70 and over group do so for social and recreational reasons.

Peterson (1981b) points out that educational participation is related to some specific, positive push rather than simply the absence of any of the barriers to participation. He states that these motivating forces or pushes are unclear, but data indicate five different explanations for these motivating forces. Peterson cites Hooper and March (1978) who suggest that institutional sponsorship is an important factor in motivating older adults to participate. A second push may be a tradition of educational participation.

A third motivating factor may be social interaction. Fisher (cited in Peterson, 1981b) reported that being with other people was the main reason given by older adults for their educational participation. A fourth factor that may motivate older adults to participate is the need for some specific information or an interest in learning about a particular topic. Marcus (1978) indicated that courses are often taken because of an academic or intellectual interest that may prove useful to

the learner at some point in the future. Fisher (cited in Peterson, 1981b) reported that "usefulness of the subject matter" was the third most important reason given for participation. A fifth possible factor motivating older adults to participate in an educational activity could be the social support and encouragement that results from membership in the sponsoring organization. They participate because they are part of the sponsoring organization; they may have participated in the planning, they know the individuals involved, and they often feel a responsibility to support the group or organization through attendance (Peterson, 1981b).

Peterson (1981a) discussed a study at the Andrus Gerontology Center for the University of Southern California on a group of older persons participating in a lecture-discussion program. The subjects were asked to compare themselves to others their age. The subjects indicated that they spent more time reading, attended more social and cultural activities, and participated in more educational programs than average.

The most important reason given for participation by this group was the need for or interest in the content of the lecture series. A second reason given was sponsorship and quality of the lecture-discussion series and was of nearly equal importance to the first on content. The third most important reason was social interaction and the fourth was association with the Andrus Volunteers program. This indicates that interest in the content is still the primary factor in determining attendance. However, an equally important motivating factor found in this study was the reputation and perceived accessibility of the sponsoring organization.

Barriers to Participation

Barriers to participation may discourage older adults from engaging in learning activity. With education having the potential to assist and maintain older people, it is of prime importance for eductional programmers and human service providers to understand the reasons underlying participation and nonparticipation among the current older cohort and to use this knowledge to maximize further participation (Thorson, 1978).

Cross (1979) has suggested three types of barriers to education participation which are applicable to older adults: (1) situational barriers, (2) institutional barriers, and (3) dispositional barriers.

Situational Barriers. Cross (1979) defines situational barriers as prohibitive costs, lack of transportation, and the inability to allocate time to the endeavor of educational participation. Situational barriers such as vision problems, cost, health, and transportation were important factors in lack of participation according to Kaplan (1960), Goodrow (1975), March et al. (1977), and Fisher (cited in Peterson, 1981a).

Marcus (1978) suggests that the socioeconomic condition of the individual is a major variable in the decision-making process. He indicates that people with lower income and status and thus having current, pressing needs are not likely to participate in education to meet those needs.

Goodrow's (1975) study of subjects over 65 showed the three major barriers to older adults' participation in existing or future educational programs to be poor vision, home responsibilities, and lack of transportation. Goodrow also reported that women indicated a definite

preference for avoiding night time activities. Over half (55.4 percent) of the women reported that they did not like to go out at night and would avoid learning experiences that required travel after dark.

Cross (1979) points out that elderly learners are often found learning on their own alone (i.e., reading, television, etc.), which she refers to as "lonely learning," because of their transportation difficulties. Covey (1980) mentions demographic variables such as health, income, and occupational status as situational barriers.

Institutional Barriers. Institutional barriers are described by Cross (1979) as location and scheduling of courses, the complexity or rigor of admission and registration, the type and level of instruction, lack of awareness of the course offerings, and instructor behaviors and stereotypes.

Fisher (cited in Peterson, 1981a) found such institutional barriers as classes being scheduled at inconvenient times, and Graney and Hayes (1976) found lack of information about the instructional offerings to be an institutional barrier.

Cross (1979) reports that location is a serious problem for the elderly and poses an institutional barrier to older adults in educational participation; structural barriers and access problems including transportation, lack of clearly marked navigational routes, campuses designed for younger students, tuition charges, and the stigma of going back to school were found by Price and Bromert (1980).

Price and Lyon's study (1982) showed that 70 percent of the respondents saw themselves as having educational needs and had an interest in

having educational opportunities made available. They stress the importance of an older adult being familiar with the site of the educational program; the more familiar they are with the site, the greater is the likelihood of their attending.

Goodrow (1975) stresses the importance of written materials selected with consideration for the visual limitations of older adults, well-designed learning programs scheduled around the time periods desired by the population adult educators are planning to serve. Existing educational programs are often offered at locations and times favorable only to the sponsoring agency or some other target group within the general population. Many university adult education programs are usually carried out on campus and during evening hours. Educational opportunities designed for older adults should be offered within immediate neighborhoods in order to reduce travel time and distance necessary in order to participate. Initial attempts to organize adult learning experiences for older adults should relate to overcoming past apprehensions and provide the participant with positive experiences relevant to present needs and interests.

Darkenwald (1980) reports that if the concern is to reach the hard-to-reach older adult, particularly the old-old and the socioeconomically disadvantaged, adult educators must abandon the conventional marketing approach that focuses on the individual consumer of services and must employ more personal "social linkage" strategies to overcome the psychosocial and situational barriers that are so formidable for this group. He states that among other things, this requires working with and

through the groups and organizations in the community with which these older adults are affiliated such as churches, senior citizen centers, and nutrition sites.

For the disadvantaged older adult, many of whom live in rural areas and urban ghettos, certain well-established practices of adult education must appear as insurmountable barriers; courses are given at night when they are afraid to go out into the street, or educational activities are offered in institutional-type settings where the elderly are expected to enroll in response to information they have read or heard (Heisel et al., 1981).

Dispositional Barriers. Cross (1979) defines dispositional barriers as including learning anxiety, the belief that learning is impossible, a lack of interest in learning, or a belief that learning is not for adults and older people. She cites the major barriers as the older adults' perception that they are too old, lack energy, or are not interested in further education. Lack of interest is reported as being the most common dispositional barrier according to Graney and Hayes (1976), Wasserman (1976), and March et al. (1977). March et al. (1977) report that 68 percent of their subjects were not interested in attending university classes; the 32 percent who answered "yes" or "maybe" were significantly younger than those who were not interested.

Norton (cited in Peterson, 1981a) suggests that anxiety about learning is also frequently mentioned by older adults. Goodrow (1975) found that respondents were not interested in taking advantage of available educational programs because of apprehension toward formal

evaluation procedures used by adult educators and lack of interest because of negative school experiences during adolescence and young adulthood. Studies have reported that the current cohort of persons in their 60's and older had, as young people, a limited and probably not very satisfying experience with education (Birren and Woodruff, 1973; Carnegie Commission, 1973; McClusky, 1974). This experience may have led them to eschew formal classroom learning in old age in favor of active daily living, which is perceived as a learning experience.

McClusky (1974) found that inaccurate conceptions of decreased learning ability in later adulthood has reduced the motivation of older adults to participate. The majority of men and women surveyed were not willing to be involved in formal learning situations because they viewed themselves as unable to successfully acquire new skills and information. Houle (1975) cites a contemporary study made by the Educational Testing Service of a national sample of people aged 55-60. Many of these people said they would like to engage in continuing education, but they felt they could not succeed at it.

Cross (1979) reports that the data reveal the socialized perception that learning is for young people, and states that the feeling of being too old to learn increases steadily with age until it becomes a common barrier to education for older people.

March et al. (1977) found that the attitude toward education among respondents is that education is, in a sense, "the process of living." That is, respondents repeatedly stated that they considered themselves and others in their age group engaged in education through their daily

activities. They stated that they learn something new every day, "albeit outside a formal classroom."

In a university study of the reasons older adults did not attend free university courses, it was found that, "It was not that older adults were not interested in 'education,' it was more a case that education was viewed as a lifelong process that could take place in or outside of the classroom, and they [the older adults] had chosen the more informal methods of education" (Wood cited in MacKay and Hixson, 1977).

Price and Lyon (1982) reported barriers cited by several researchers. Barriers found include: (1) the notion that education is primarily for the young and gifted (Hruby, 1980); (2) the belief that spending money on education is a luxury (Hruby, 1980); (3) negative stereotypes about aging and ability (Barrow and Smith, 1979); (4) feelings of adequacy, usefulness, and security fostered by the environment (Tuckman and Lorge, 1958); (5) the belief that striving for intellectual growth is not an age-appropriate behavior for older people (Labouvie-Vief et al., 1974); and (6) the self-fulfilling prophecy concerning intellectual decline in the later years (Ansello and Hayslip, 1979).

Educational Interests of Older Adults

Educational and Psychological Needs

Since the focus of this study was on determining the educational interests of older adults, it was important here to discuss the difference between educational interests and needs. Needs are usually

prescribed by other people (supervisors, content experts, program planners, etc.), and represent a perceived imbalance, lack of adjustment, or gap betwen the present situation or status quo and a new or changed set or conditions assumed to be more desirable. Tyler (1949) refers to a need as "...a gap between some conception of a desirable norm, that is, some standard of philosophic value and the actual status. Need in this sense is the gap between what is and what should be." A need or gap is identified when information about the learner is compared with some desirable standards, some conception of acceptable norms, so that the difference between the present condition of the learner and the acceptable norm can be identified.

Irving Rosow in Housing and Social Interaction of the Aged (1967) describes educational needs as "perceived lacks or weaknesses in the knowledge, attitude, skill, or values which older people have." He says that generally these needs are determined by authorities through conjecture and the application of theory.

Howard McClusky's Background and Issues on Education (1971), written for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, is well known for its proposed typology of needs of older adults. McClusky identified five categories of needs: (1) coping needs--needs which result from the decrements which occur in aging and the obsolescence of unused skill or capacity, (2) expressive needs--activity or participation engaged in for its own sake, (3) contributive needs--the altruistic desire of most people to assist others in coping with current problems and in achieving their developmental tasks, (4) influence needs--the desire of persons of

all ages, including older people, to be concerned with the general functioning of society, to affect some meaningful change, and (5) transcendence needs--needs for gaining some deeper understanding of the meaning of life, the integration of self into the larger purpose of life. Havighurst (1976) and Schaie (1978) have viewed later adulthood as a special period of intellectual growth. Both authors propose that educators recognize that older men and women are in a stage of "self-realization." McMahon (1979) also argues that the highest priority of individuals in late adulthood is the attainment of self-realization.

Other studies on the educational needs of older adults have been done by Londoner (1971), Jones (1979), Rosow (1967), Donahue (1950), Froelicher (1956), Reals (1956), Background Paper on Education for Aging (1971), Hendrickson and Barnes (1967), and DeCrow (1975). A summary of the needed program topics is included in Table 1, pages 28-32.

Educational Interests

Educational wants (or interests) on the other hand, are described by Rosow (1967) as "the salient desires or preferences of older people (those content or skill areas generated or selected by older people in community groups or institutional settings) when asked about their preferences for learning activity."

Table 1

Subject-Matter Topic Reported as Educational Interests or Needs of Older Adults

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TOPIC	STUDIES OF NEED	STUDIES OF INTEREST	SOURCE(s)
Health and Physical Fitness			
Health	X	X	DeCrow, 1975 Galvin et al., 1975 Cross, 1979 Roscow, 1967
Physical changes	X		Froehlicher, 1956
Nutrition		X	Galvin et al., 1975 Cross, 1979
Physical fitness		X	Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967
Good grooming		X	Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967
Financial Security			
Financial planning	X	X	Galvin et al., 1975 Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967 Froelicher, 1956 Johnson, 1979
Supplemental income		X	Galvin et al., 1975
Wills and probate		X	Johnson, 1979
Spirituality			
Religion	X	X	Whitehouse Conference on Aging, 1971 Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967 Moody, 1976
Philosophy	X	X	MacKay and Hixson, 1977 Moody, 1976

TOPIC	STUDIES OF NEED	STUDIES OF INTEREST	SOURCE(s)
	Personal Development		
Personal growth	X	X	Havighurst, 1974 DeCrow, 1975 Ralston, 1981 Donahue, 1950
Social Interaction	X	X	Donahue, 1950 Galvin et al., 1975
Creative use of time	X		Forelicher, 1956
Counseling	X		Reals, 1956
	Life Coping Skills		
Problems associated with aging	X	X	Donahue, 1950 Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967 Ralston, 1981 Galvin et al., 1975 Froelicher, 1956 Reals, 1956
Family relationships	X	X	Rosow, 1967 Whitehouse Conference on Aging, 1971 DeCrow, 1975 Ralston, 1981 Froelicher, 1956
Coping with loneliness		X	Johnson, 1979
Keeping mentally active	X		Jones, 1979
	Medical Concerns		
Medical care	X	X	Johnson, 1979 Roscow, 1967
Safety		X	Anderson et al., 1981

TOPIC	STUDIES OF NEED	STUDIES OF INTEREST	SOURCE(s)
Consumer Competence			
Consumer education		X	DeCrow, 1975 Galvin et al., 1975
Automobile maintenance		X	Johnson, 1979
Housing needs	X		Rosow, 1967 Froelicher, 1956
Career Related Topics			
Retirement preparation		X	Galvin et al., 1975
Training for voluntary services	X	X	Galvin et al., 1975 Jones, 1979 Love, 1979
Technical/vocational training		X	Anderson et al., 1981
Professional training	X	X	Anderson et al., 1981 Jones, 1979 Donahue, 1950
Employment skills	X	X	Love, 1979 Froelicher, 1956 Jones, 1979
Art			
Art appreciation		X	Hiemstra and Brown, 1975
Art		X	MacKay and Hixson, 1977
Music			
Music appreciation		X	Hiemstra and Brown, 1975
Music		X	Papalia-Finlay et al., 1981

TOPIC	STUDIES OF NEED	STUDIES OF INTEREST	SOURCE(s)
	The World We Live In		
Public affairs	X	X	Whitehouse Conference on Aging, 1971 Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967 Havighhurst, 1974
Foreign affairs		X	Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967
Community Involvement	X	X	Forelicher, 1956 Anderson et al., 1981
Current affairs		X	Papalia-Finlay et al., 1981
	Hobbies		
Arts and crafts	X	X	Reals, 1956 MacKay and Hixson, 1977 Graney and Hayes, 1956 Cross, 1979
Hobbies/recreaton	X	X	Cross, 1979 Galvin et al., 1975 Anderson et al., 1981 DeCrow, 1975 Havighurst, 1974 Jones, 1979
Gardening		X	Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967 Havinghurst, 1974
Travel		X	Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967
Photography		X	MacKay and Hixson, 1977
Bridge		X	MacKay and Hixson, 1977

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TOPIC	STUDIES OF NEED	STUDIES OF INTEREST	SOURCE(s)
	Academic		
Literature	X	X	Papalia-Finlay, 1981 MacKay and Hixson, 1977 Moody, 1976
Psychology	X	X	Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967 Moody, 1976
Foreign languages		X	MacKay and Hixson, 1977 Papalia-Finlay, 1977
History		X	Hendrickson and Barnes, 1967 Papalia-Finlay et al., 1981
Liberal arts	X		Reals, 1956

Rosow drew a distinction between the problems which older people have and those which experts think they have. A similar distinction can be drawn between the education needs and interests of older adults, for their educational needs and interests are often substantially different. The distinction between needs and interests is crucial in planning programs for older adults. Successful programs include a conscious determination of the appropriate mix of educational activities that are directed toward both the interests and the needs of participants.

Personal interest appears to be the chief motive for enrollment in continuing education activities by older adults, especially for those in the older age categories, with low educational attainment, and for women. Papalia-Finlay et al. (1981) suggest that current low rates of participation by elderly people in formal learning situations may be improved by developing programs that consider their attitudes, learning interests, and needs. Traditionally, education has been geared for the young; however, recently it has been recognized that there is a need for continuing education for adults in the later years. "In view of the fact that the oldest and least educated also participate the least, one is tempted to conclude that perhaps adult education has not been able as yet to stimulate their interest or meet their particular needs." (Anderson and Darkenwald, 1979).

Anderson and Darkenwald (1979) found that personal interest appeared to be the main reason for women taking a course, with almost half of them giving it as cause. For men, personal interest and current job seem to be equally important motives.

Knowles (1980) considers it important to find out what adults want

to learn rather than what others say; thus it is important to start where the learners are in terms of their interests. Tyler (1949) also argues for using studies of student interests as a basis for program objectives.

An important motivation for older adult participation is the importance of the learning undertaken as viewed by the individual learner. Calhoun and Gounard (1979) reported that older people learned significantly more when the material was highly meaningful than they did when it was less meaninful. It was concluded that understanding the needs and wants of the older adult learner and directing the content toward these meaningful areas will result in greater motivation as well as greater learning.

Peterson (1971) points out that many older people feel that education has no relevance to their lives, "They only buy, with their time and dollars, what they feel they really need, and it's obvious, they don't feel they need education." Price and Lyon (1982), however, found that 121 (70 percent) of the respondents in their study saw themselves as having educational needs. According to Carp et al. (1974), there is a likelihood that over three quarters of American adults are interested in some form of new learning, and almost a third of them participated in some kind of formal or informal learning within the past year. Based on a national probability sample of almost 1900 respondents, this study, translated into numbers, projects that some 80 million Americans between the ages of 18 and 60 who are not studying full-time are probably interested in continuing their learning, and some 32 million adults have most likely recently engaged in learning.

Peterson (1981a) discusses a study done at the Andrus Gerontology Center and notes the reasons given for participation by the subjects. The most important reason given for participation by this group was the need for or interest in the content of the lecture series.

Individual Differences

Program planners also need to consider the great variation that exists in the older population; few interests apply to all older people. Studies have also shown significant differences in education interests among older adults according to sex and educational level, race, and socioeconomic status (Johnstone and Rivera, 1965; Ralson, 1981). MacKay and Hixon (1977) state that the elderly are a highly diverse group--differing in background, skills, prejudices, and physical abilities. They stress the importance of understanding the unique characteristics of older adults in planning programs and point out that there are greater individual differences than those found in any other group of students.

Women themselves are a very diverse group, although most studies treat women as a single demographic category contrasted with men (Cross, 1979). Cross points out that it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that women represent a homogeneous group with common educational needs and interests, and that this is far from correct. She states that data suggest that groups consisting of employed men and women have more educational needs in common than groups consisting of all women. Cross suggests that if program planners are to deal sensitively with the educational needs of women, it is necessary to look more carefully at subgroups of women with common educational goals.

Interests and Age

It seems clear from several studies that interest in learning declines with increasing age. This appears to be true across the life span, but a sharper decline is observed after the age of 55 (Cross, 1979). Johnstone and Rivera (1965) reported that 65 percent of persons in the 50-59 age group expressed interest in learning new things, while only 53 percent of the 60-69 age group indicated an interest in learning new things, and only 35 percent in the 70-79 age group reported this interest.

Wasserman (1976) observes that age is likely to influence interest in college education among the elderly. "Beyond a certain age it is unlikely that elderly individuals will have the...motivation to participate in higher education." She recommends courses be planned for older adults under 70 years of age.

Peterson (1981a) also concludes that interest in education declines with age: "Those [course titles chosen from a list of topics] are the highest interest of the choices provided, but since many older people evidence little or no interest in any form of education, the choice may have little meaning."

Research Findings Pertaining to Education Interests

Various studies have reported the educational interests of older adults. Cross (1979) states that, of all groups of learners, the elderly stand out for their intrinsic motivations for learning. She says that they are not interested in degrees or certificates but that they are learning because it is enjoyable and personally satisfying.

Hiemstra's (1972) study of needs and interests of older adults shows

that older adults do have particular perceived needs and interests which should be examined in order to plan programs for them. His study showed that instrumental activities (competency areas designed for effective mastery of the challenges of old age) were perceived by older people as more important than expressive activities (experiences that are designed to increase a person's enjoyment of life); however, in actual practice, he later found (1975, 1976, 1977/78) that older, female, urban, college-graduted, single, and upper-class subjects engaged in more expressive projects.

Hiemstra (1982) reported that subsequent researchers have also found mixed results regarding preference for instrumental or expressive learning activities. Whatley (1974) found her group of elderly more likely to make expressive selections than gerontologists or adult educators, and Burkey (1975) found a greater expressive orientation in those subjects with higher amounts of education, those older overall, and younger females as a separate group; Bauer (1975) also found a preference by elderly for participation in expressive types of classes and activities; Irby (1978) found that neither instrumental nor expressive types of learning affected participation rates; and Goodrow (1974) found an overall preference for instrumental course titles.

Marcus (1978) addressed the educational interests of adults with a more sophisticated statistical analysis. He concluded that persons who are younger, with less education and a lower desire for enjoyment in the learning situation, were more likely to express instrumental educational preferences (they wanted to participate in education which would lead to a better job or the solution of a problem). He found that higher

socioeconomic status (income, occupation, and eduation) and being female were likely to lead to a perception that education has an intrinsic value and that it is desired for its own sake. He found that older people were likely to see the education they participate in as being expressive regardless of the instructional intent. He found that they do not perceive education as a means of solving practical problems (instrumental) but rather as a means of immediate gratification through enjoyment of intellectual stimulation, social interaction, and interesting use of their leisure time. Marcus (1978) developed a third category, expressive-instrumental, to describe a learning orientation in which the activity is enjoyed for its own sake and for a contemplated future use.

Havighurst (1976) suggested that instrumental and expressive aspects of education are important factors for planners of older adult programs to consider. Londoner (1971) also argued that the two domains are important for both planning and needs assessment activities.

Hoffman (1978) makes a strong case for the elderly as a ready audience for arts programs (expressive learning). Graney and Hayes (1976) also found that older persons expressed considerable interest in arts and crafts. Heimstra and Brown (1979) found high interest in art and music appreciation by older adults.

Moody (1976) emphasizes that the major goal for planners of programs for older adults is to provide courses in the content areas of literature, philosophy, psychology, and religion. MacKay and Hixon (1977) state that courses in the subject areas of art, foreign languages, literature and philosophy are preferred by most older adults in con-

tinuing education over the age of 60.

Cross (1979) found the major interests of older adults to be hobbies and crafts, nutrition and health, and other topics that have practical relevance for their lives. She found adult learners to be generally pragmatic; they wanted some visible payoff from the instruction they received. She found men to be more interested in job training and women to have a more general or expressive interest.

Hendrickson and Barnes (1967) interviewed a sample of 2307 persons over the age of 65 and reported that the greatest educational interests of this group were in religion, problems of growing old, gardening, travel, physical fitness, good grooming, psychology, managing financial affairs, history, public affairs, and foreign relations. They found men more likely to be interested in public affairs, travel, and household mechanics and women more interested in domestic areas and the arts.

Ralston's study (1981) revealed four major educational interests: problems associated with aging, personal development, self-fulfillment, and home and family topics.

Gavin et al. (1975) cited by Peterson (1981b) reported on a survey of older people's educational interests undertaken by several community colleges in the Los Angeles area. They found that coping with problems of life, health, and finance were of greatest interest; retirement preparation was second, and social development and training for voluntary service was third. Approximately sixty percent of this sample indicated an interest in hobby and recreational subjects, health and nutrition, consumer education, and supplemental income.

Johnson (1979), who studied the educational interests of widows age

55 and over, found the following items to be most important to the 55-65 year old group: how to care for an automobile, self defense, and how to handle a bank account. For the 65-75 year old group, the most important items were: wills and probate, coping with loneliness, self defense, and when to call the doctor. For the group over age 75, no items were selected by 20 percent or more of the group.

Love (1979) studied the employment related educational needs of older adults. She reported that her respondents were very interested in taking training or classes which they believed would increase their chances of finding work. Fifty-six percent of the respondents reported that they would be very interested in attending a class or workshop on the subject of "Job and Training Possibilities for Older Adults." Forty-one percent expressed a similar degree of interest in a training course which would teach a new job. Approximately one-third of the respondents were interested in the topics "How to Interview for a Job" and "How to Find a Job." For each of the topics except "How to Interview for a Job," a larger percentage of women than men expressed strong interest.

Roger DeCrow (1975) found in his study that areas such as hobbies and recreation, consumer education, health, home and family life, personal development, and aesthetic appreciation seemed to be the learning interest areas of the older person.

Havighurst (1976) reported that areas of study chosen by adults between 55-60 were: hobbies and recreation--45 percent; vocational subjects--26 percent; home and family--13 percent; general liberal education--12 percent; personal development--7 percent; agriculture--4

percent; and public affairs--1 percent.

MacKay and Hixson (1977) reported that in the Extension Institute of Lifetime Learning it was found that oil painting accounted for more than one-half of the registrations. Crafts, rocks, photography and bridge were all popular classes. Conversational Spanish was the most popular academic subject.

Anderson et al. (1981) found that among women, 50 percent of participation can be accounted for by courses on hobbies and personal improvement. In general, 25 percent of the participants chose educational activities related to their hobbies, which appear to be the most popular type of course for the population. Those 60-64 years of age tended to enroll in technical/vocational, professional, safety, and high school and college credit courses proportionately more than the older groups. The oldest group (70+) had a higher enrollment in civic and community service courses.

Papalia-Finlay et al. (1981) conducted a study to examine attitudes of potential participants in continuing education programs regarding factors that would reduce anxiety given the abilities and learning needs of the target group. The authors looked at 27 white, predominantly upper middle class, highly educated women 65 and over. The majority of the sample (89 percent) indicated an interest in taking humanities classes (i.e., history, literature, music, languages, and current affairs). Although highly educated elderly women appear interested in taking university-level classes, the authors caution in generalizing results of need and attitude assessment of highly educated older adults to less economically, occupationally, and educationally privileged

elderly.

The findings presented have suggested that older adults have a variety of educational preferences. Table 1, pages 27-31, lists the various topics that have been reported as educational interests or cited as educational needs of older adults by references in the literature.

Needs Assessment

"Needs assessment is a major concern in planning services for older people, wherever they are found," according to Little (1980). She states that American planners and policy makers are charged with this responsibility under the Older Americans Act. She also reports that the state of the art is presently in its infancy. "Need is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional concept." Little points out that needs perceptions vary with the eye of the beholder; they are relative to person, time, place, culture, and rising expectations. "An initial difficulty in assessing needs has been either using the terms need, want and demand interchangeably, or alternatively assigning them specialized meanings," according to Little.

According to Londoner (1978):

> "The existing literature, on program planning in general, and on the processes of assessing needs specifically, lacks, however, a sound, theoretical framework that program planning practitioners can use. Much of the literature simply provides techniques and procedures for assessing interests and needs, with limited thought having been given to the theoretical basis underlying stated or unstated assumptions."

He suggests that educational programming expertise requires a better understanding of needs and interests of the older adult.

Definitions of needs assessment (or the term "situational analysis") usually refer to "the effort to identify the need, gap, or condition that exists between what is and what should be--or between what is and that which is more desirable" (Boyle, 1981, p. 140). Copeland (1982) maintains that the concepts of needs assessment, however, deals with more than the educational needs of a group of learners; he suggests that it also involves identifying the educational interests of adult learners, related problems and role expectations of contemporary society, and contributions of subject matter experts. This is the framework suggested by Tyler (1949) as the sources of data and the kinds of data that can be collected for determining the educational objectives of a program.

Needs assessment, in this study, will be defined as an initial stage in the process of determining educational goals or objectives in which a situation or condition is studied to determine the factors that are desired or should be changed. In adult education, the factors that are desired are usually changes in knowledge, skill and attitude (Copeland, 1982).

Methods of Assessing Education Interests

The methodology for determining educational interests of older people is not well developed according to Peterson (1981a), but several means are available: mailed or group questionnaires, use of advisory committees, observation of existing classes for indications of additional interest, informal discussions with potential participants, and analysis of enrollment behavior as a means of predicting future interest of older adults.

Hiemstra and Long (1974) suggest needs assessment activities may require obtaining perceived preferences through methods like interest surveys. According to Tyler (1949) almost all of the methods of social investigation can be employed in studying the learner's needs and interests. In some cases, observations by the teacher will establish many facts about students. Tyler reports a second source is the interview; however, it is time-consuming, and is used generally on only a sample of individuals. He suggests that the questionnaire is a useful device for getting information which the student has no hesitation in providing. "Interest questionnaires have been very widely used as well as questionnaries about recreational activities, about problems of a personal and social sort, about reading habits, health habits, work experience and the like" (Tyler, 1949, p. 13).

Hendrickson (1973) suggests several ways of determining needs: (1) formal survey instruments, (2) informal survey instruments or well-developed checklists, (3) consulting with community leaders, and (4) arm-chair huching, sometimes called intuiting.

Knowles (1980) lists several different techniques which are used: surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. Knowles feels that "since interests are expressions of preference among alternative activities, the only valid source of information about the interests of adults is the individuals themselves." He goes on to say that it is surprising how many adult educators in actual practice act on assumptions about what people would be interested in rather than finding out from them what their interests are.

According to Londoner (1978) the questionnaire survey is relatively

inexpensive and fairly easy to administer, but it has severe limitations related to such factors as validity and return rate.

Little (1980) states that there seems to be an emerging consensus among researchers that no one needs assessment method will do; a multi-faceted approach is suggested.

In reviewing various approaches to needs assessment, many different approaches could be used; some prefer a multi-faceted approach. However, the interest checklist/survey technique is supported by Knowles' contention of the learner being the best source (the only valid source) of information about the interests of adults. The ease and modest expense of administration are considered as advantages in using an interest survey. The amount of time required for administering the survey and the fact that a large number of people could be reached using this method are other advantages of the method. Limitations of validity and rate of return are recognized however.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gather information on educational interests of women who are 60 years of age or more who are current members of a voluntary organization (the Minneapolis YWCA). This chapter will deal with the selection of the population sample, the design and distribution of the questionnaire, the data collection and data analysis, and the limitations of the study.

The Sample

The subjects used for this study were women who are current members of the Minneapolis YWCA who are 60 years of age or more. There were 383 members of the YWCA who were in this age range at the time of the study. It was decided to do a random sample of approximately one-half of this population (N=200). The sample was selected through the use of the table of random numbers.

The Questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire was selected as the most efficient means of surveying a large number of people to determine their educational interests. The questionnaire was developed by the investigator, and was revised with the assistance of professionals and faculty members in older adult programs at the University of Minnesota.

Sources of the questionnaire items included:

(1) A review of the adult education literature on educational needs and interests of older adults.

(2) The expertise of faculty members and professionals in older adult programs and adult education.

(3) The expertise of the YWCA professional staff.

The questionnaire was divided into two major sections for the purposes of this study. The first part dealt with curriculum content areas which could be of interest to the respondents, and the second part dealt with demographic data of respondents and with program design questions.

In the first section, respondents were asked to indicate their interest in 148 educational programs which were grouped in thirteen categories. They were asked to check whether they would attend or would not attend the particular class or program. The thirteen categories and the number of items in each category included: (1) Health and Physical Fitness (18 items), (2) Financial Security (11 items), (3) Spirituality (6 items), (4) Personal Development (6 items), (5) Life Coping Skills (11 items), (6) Medican Concerns (9 items), (7) Household Management (7 items), (8) Consumer Competence (10 items), (9) Career Related Topics (8 items), (10) Art (8 items), (11) Music (10 items), (12) The World We Live In (19 items), and (13) Hobbies (25 items). These categories were selected because they showed the range of adult education topics believed to be of interest or concern to older adults. This constituted the major portion of the questionnaire.

The second portion of the questionnaire requested demographic data from the subjects. The respondents were asked about age, race, martial status, and educational level. The investigator also wanted to learn what methods of learning the respondents were interested in, whether

they were interested in learning with people of their own age or of other ages, and the most convenient times of day, days of the week, and the seasons preferred by the respondents to attend classes.

Other items of interest were the types of YWCA activities respondents generally participated in and their level of participation. These responses affect program design and could be used by the YWCA staff to plan programs.

Three versions of the questionnaire were reviewed for content and face validity with a faculty member in Adult Education, two professionals working with older adult programs, and two members of the YWCA staff. The proposed questionnaire and data collection process were also reviewed and approved by the University's committee on Human Subjects in Research (Appendix A). No other tests of validity and reliability were conducted. A copy of the final version of the questionnaire is found in Appendix B.

Data Collection

The data were collected between May and July, 1982 through a three-step procedure. First, a letter requesting the respondents to participate in the study and complete a questionnaire in the YWCA office was sent. This procedure was used in order to save on postage and to encourage people to come to the YWCA. (The respondents were told that a questionnaire would be sent to them if they did not respond to this request within two weeks). Six people responded to this request.

Second, a follow-up letter was sent in three weeks to the respondents along with a questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

The questionnaires were coded for purposes of tracking the return of the mailings. Seventy-two people responded to this follow-up letter.

Third, two weeks later the investigator called all non-respondents. Twenty-two questionnaires were returned as a result of this telephone follow-up. In addition, five of the questionnaires were completed over the telephone which had been returned with incomplete data. The total process resulted in 100 persons (50 percent) returning usable questionnaires.

Table 2 provides a description of the responses to the initial letter, follow-up letter, and telephone follow-up.

TABLE 2

Respondent Response to the Questionnaire

	Number	Percent
Number of persons included in the study	200	
Responded to initial letter	6	3
Responded to follow-up letter	72	36
Responded to telephone call	22	11
Total returned questionnaires	100	50

Data Analysis

The data from the mailed questionnaire were analyzed by computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences at the University of Minnesota. Frequencies were tabulated for each item as well as by

age, marital status and educational level for the thirteen program categories. Raw data are summarized in Appendix C. Analysis of variance tests were made to test the significance of the responses among groups; and where differences occurred, the Tukey HSD procedure was used to compare individual means. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also used to show the association between a person's interest in one category and another.

Data pertaining to some of the program design concerns such as working outside the home for pay, serving as a volunteer or having interest in being a volunteer, the distance repsondents live from the YWCA and their principal means of transportation, and fees considered reasonable for programs were not analyzed because of the ambiguity of the questions and the incompleteness of the responses.

Limitations of the Study

The information in this study has certain limitations. First, the subjects were drawn from one membership organization; thus, the findings cannot be generalized to all older adults. Second, the survey was limited to women. Third, the response rate was only 50 percent. And fourth, the response set of the respondents (i.e., respondents checking several items in one category) may have resulted in many items being checked in certain categories.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The findings presented here are based on the survey responses of 100 women who were members of the Minneapolis (Minnesota) YWCA at the time of the study. The organization of the chapter will be as follows: the characteristics of the respondents will be presented first, the dat pertaining to educational interests will follow, and tests of relationships between the demographics and program variables conclude the chapter.

Characteristics of Respondents

This study was conducted with an all-female population (N=100). As Table 2 indicates, the largest percentage of respondents was in the 60-69 age group (62 percent). Twenty-eight percent of the women were aged 70-79 and 10 percent were in the 80+ age group. Ninety-eight percent of the women were Caucasian, 1 percent was American Indian, and 1 percent was listed as other. Regarding marital status, 38 percent of the sample was married, 34 percent single, and 28 percent widowed. In items of education, the highest percent (41 percent) of the sample surveyed had completed some college/vocational school.

TABLE 3

Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Age	Number	Percent
60-69	62	62
70-79	28	28
80+	10	10
Race		
Caucasian	98	98
American Indian	1	1
Other	1	1
Marital Status		
Married	38	38
Single	34	34
Widowed	28	28
Educational Level		
Grade School	6	6
High School/GED	15	15
Some College/ Vocational School	41	41
College Degree	22	22
Professional/ Graduate Degree	13	13
Other Certificate	3	3

Respondents were asked how often they participated in activities at the YWCA. This information is presented in Table 4. Approximately one-third (33 percent) participated once a week or more.

TABLE 4

Participation in YWCA Activities

Participation Rate	Number/Percent
1-2 times per year	22
3-10 times per year	10
Once a month	7
More than once a month	14
Once a week	15
More than once a week	17
No response	17
Total	100

Respondents were asked the types of activities they generally participated in at the YWCA. The highest number (N=50) participated in recreational activities, the lowest (N=8) participated in tours or discussions (See Table 5).

TABLE 5

Types of Activities Generally Participated in by Respondents

Activity	Number/Percent
Recreation	50
Classes	33
Clubs	17
Social	14
Discussions	8
Tours	8
No Response	15

In summary, the typical respondent was between the ages of 60-69, Caucasian, married and has had some college/vocational school. She participates in YWCA activities at least once a month and most likely in recreational activities and/or classes.

Educational Interests

One hundred forty-eight program topics were ranked by the respondents in terms of their interest in attending educational programs on that subject. These program topics were grouped in 13 categories. The respondents' ranking of the program categories in terms of interest will be presented first. This will be followed by showing the percentage of individuals who would attend classes for each topic within each of the thirteen categories.

Respondent Interest in the General Program Categories

Table 6 indicates the total number of responses, the mean response, and the number of items in each category. A total of 3,638 program topics were checked which represented a mean of 36 topics per respondent.

Since the number of items varied from category to category, an adjusted mean was computed to reflect the rank order of the categories in terms of interest from the respondents. As a category, Financial Security was highest in interest for these women.

TABLE 6

Mean Number of Program Topics that Respondents Would Attend

Program Category	Rank	Number of Items	Topic Responses	Mean	Adjusted Mean	Other Responses	Total Responses
Financial Security	1	11	326	3.26	.296	2	328
Health and Physical Fitness	2	18	516	5.16	.286	7	523
Art	3	8	213	2.13	.266	3	216
Personal Development	4	6	159	1.59	2.65	9	168
Life Coping Skills	5T	11	273	2.73	.248	2	275
Spirituality	5T	6	149	1.49	.248	3	152
The World We Live In	7	19	465	4.65	.245	0	465
Medical Concerns	8	9	218	2.18	.242	5	223
Household Management	9	7	166	1.66	.237	1	167
Consumer Competence	10	10	229	2.29	.229	1	230
Music	11	10	225	2.25	.225	0	225
Hobbies	12	25	545	5.45	.218	10	555
Career Related Topics	13	8	154	1.54	.192	1	155
TOTALS		148	3638	36.38	.235	44	3682

Respondent Interest in Specific Topics Within Program Categories

The following tables (Tables 7-19) indicate the percentage of respondents who would attend, would not attent, or gave no response to interest in specific program topics included in the various categories. The topics are rank ordered as to those which received the highest to lowest frequency of response. "Popular" classes were defined as those which 33 percent of the sample indicated that they would attend.

Financial Security was the highest ranked category overall in terms of the percentage of respondents who said they would attend classes in this area. The most popular classes in this category were: Estates and Wills, Investing, and Medical Benefits. However, classes on seven additional topics would be attended by 27 to 31 percent of the respondents. They are: Understanding the Stock Market, Understanding the Economy, Income Tax, Health Care Costs, Financial Planning, Social Security, and Money Management/Budgeting (See Table 7).

TABLE 7

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Financial Security Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Estates and Wills	38	50	12
Investing	34	52	14
Medical Benefits	33	54	13
Understanding the Stock Market	31	54	15
Understanding the Economy	30	55	15
Income Tax	30	53	17
Health Care Costs	29	57	14
Financial Planning	29	55	16
Social Security	28	57	3
Money Management/Budgeting	27	56	17
Insurance Options	17	67	16
TOTAL	326		

The second category in terms of interest was Health and Physical Fitness. The popular classes in this category were: Swimming, Exercise Classes, Nutritional Needs Over 60, Biological Aspects of Aging, Relaxation, Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation, Health Maintenance, and Weight Watching (See Table 8).

TABLE 8

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Health and Physical Fitness Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Swimming	62	30	8
Exercise Classes	53	33	14
Nutritional Needs Over 60	46	40	14
Biological Aspects of Aging	40	42	18
Relaxation	38	51	18
Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation	38	46	16
Health Maintenance	35	47	18
Weight Watching	33	54	13
First Aid	28	53	19
Aerobics	27	57	16
Home Nursing Skills	24	58	18
Vitamins	23	62	15
Yoga	20	66	14
Special Diets	17	65	18
Cross Country Skiing	14	69	17
Sexuality: Sex After 60	9	73	18
Food Fads	6	77	17
Menopause	3	79	18
TOTAL	516		

In the category of Art, Tours of Art Museums and Art Appreciation were the classes receiving highest interest. However, Water Color and Drawing/Sketching were selected by 31 percent of the respondents (See Table 9).

TABLE 9

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Art Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Tours of Art Museums	40	42	18
Art Appreciation	35	49	16
Water Color	31	53	16
Drawing/Sketching	31	53	16
Art History	24	58	18
Oil Painting	22	61	17
Fabric Art	18	61	21
Sculpture	12	71	17
TOTAL	213		

In the Personal Development category, Problem Solving/Decision Making was the most popular class chosen; however, Speed Reading would be attended by 32 percent of the subjects (See Table 10).

TABLE 10

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Personal Development Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Problem Solving/Decision Making	35	54	11
Speed Reading	32	54	14
Assertiveness	25	59	16
Self Defense	24	61	15
Writing Non-Fiction	23	66	11
Writing Fiction	20	68	12
TOTAL	159		

The most popular classes in the Life Coping Skills area were Developing New Friends, Handling Legal Matters, and Stress (See Table 11).

TABLE 11

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Life Coping Skills Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Developing New Friends	40	49	11
Handling Legal Matters	40	50	10
Stress	36	55	9
Depression	28	59	13
Loneliness	24	62	14
Personal Illness and Disease	23	64	13
Relocation	19	67	14
Dealing with Illness and Disease of Others	19	65	16
Widowhood	16	70	14
Death, Dying and Bereavement	16	69	15
Living with Relatives/Family	12	74	14
TOTAL	273		

In the Spirituality Category, the only class to meet the 33 percent criterion was Comparative Religions (see Table 12).

TABLE 12

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Spirituality Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Comparative Religions	33	50	17
Ethics and Values	28	54	18
Philosophy	27	55	18
Women in Religion	22	62	16
Understanding Theology	22	60	18
Personal Religious Philosophy	17	66	17
TOTAL	149		

The World We Live In category (See Table 13) indicates Current Events, Understanding Computers, and Local and State Issues as the classes receiving the highest interest. The topics of International Political Issues and You and Your Future were close to the 33 percent criterion.

TABLE 13

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the World We Live in Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Current Events	42	44	14
Understanding Computers	38	47	15
Local and State Issues	37	47	16
International Political Issues	31	54	15
You and Your Future	31	70	17
National Political Issues	29	56	15
Computers in the Home	29	56	15
Public Policy and Aging	27	56	17
Third World Countries	26	59	15
Aging: Myths and Stereotypes	25	58	17
The Economy	24	60	16
Women and Public Leadership	23	60	17
Ecology	22	62	16
Solar Energy	20	63	17
Racial/Ethnic Issues	19	64	17
Intergenerational Issues	17	66	17
Human Abuse	15	68	17
National Defense and Security	15	69	16
Nuclear Energy	13	70	17
TOTAL	465		

The Medical Concerns category (Table 14) shows Foot Care and Medical Problems Over 60 as the two most popular classes; Is It Aging or Disease, was ranked third with 31 percent indicating an interest in such a class.

TABLE 14

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Medical Concerns Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Foot Care	34	47	19
Medical Problems Over 60	33	49	18
Is It Aging or Disease?	31	48	21
Hypertension	26	54	20
Heart Disease	24	57	19
Your Doctor and You	24	57	19
Medications	22	57	21
Cancer	20	57	23
Chemical Abuse	4	74	22
TOTAL	218		

In Table 15, Household Management, the two classes receiving the highest interest were Cooking for One or Two and Indoor Plants (See Table 15).

TABLE 15

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Household Management Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Cooking for One or Two	42	40	18
Indoor Plants	34	47	19
Interior Decorating	23	57	20
Maintenance and Home Repairs	22	60	18
Winterizing your Home	16	65	19
Home Safety	15	65	20
Yard Maintenance	14	65	21
TOTAL	166		

In the area of Consumer Competence (See Table 16), Eating Well for Less was the most popular class. However, Utilizing Social Services and Selecting a Long-Term Care Facility received similar ratings in terms of interest.

TABLE 16

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Consumer Competence Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Eating Well for Less	34	50	16
Utilizing Social Services	30	53	17
Selecting a Long-Term Care Facility	30	55	15
Automobile Maintenance	23	62	15
Small Appliance Maintenance	22	63	15
Housing Options	20	64	16
Efficient Energy Use	20	62	18
Buying and Selling a Home	19	66	15
Funeral Arrangements	16	68	16
Quacks, Frauds and Con Artists	15	67	18
TOTAL	229		

In the Music category (See Table 17) the popular classes were: Trips to Concerts and Music Appreciation. In addition, Classical Music was close to meeting the 33 percent criterion.

TABLE 17

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Music Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Trips to Concerts	42	40	18
Music Appreciation	39	44	17
Classical Music	31	52	17
Opera	29	53	18
Sing-alongs	21	61	18
Community Chorus	17	65	18
Music Instrument Lessons	17	64	19
Contemporary Music	14	66	20
Community Band/Orchestra	8	73	19
Voice Lessons	7	74	19
TOTAL	225		

In the Hobbies category, the most popular classes were: Travel, Knitting/Crocheting, Gourmet Cooking, and Bridge. Classes that were close to the 33 percent citerion were Flower Arranging, Needlework, and Antiques (See Table 18).

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TABLE 18

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Hobbies Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Travel	48	37	15
Knitting/Crocheting	38	47	15
Gourmet Cooking	35	47	18
Bridge	34	51	15
Flower Arranging	31	51	18
Needlework	31	55	14
Antiques	30	54	16
Bird Watching	28	53	19
Quilting	27	55	18
Photography	25	58	17
Ethnic Cooking	21	60	19
Furniture Refinishing	21	60	19
Gardening	20	60	20
Weaving	20	63	17

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TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Dancing	19	61	20
Backgammon	18	62	20
Ceramics/Pottery	15	66	19
Astrology	15	65	20
Other Card Games	14	47	39
Bowling	12	70	18
Jewelery Making	11	70	19
Woodworking	10	71	19
Coin Collecting	9	73	18
Chess	8	73	19
Stamp Collecting	5	74	21
TOTAL	545		

In the category of Career Related Topics, there were no classes that met the criterion of an expression of interest by 33 percent of the respondents. However, Volunteer Opportunities and Careers in Retirement were checked by 32 and 31 percent respectively of the respondents (See Table 19).

TABLE 19

Percentage of Respondents Who Would Attend Classes in the Career Related Topics Area

TOPIC	WOULD ATTEND	WOULD NOT ATTEND	NO RESPONSE
Volunteer Opportunities	32	52	16
Careers in Retirement	31	55	14
Work Opportunities	23	60	17
Obtaining a Job	15	68	17
Leadership Training	15	69	16
Preparing for Retirement	14	71	15
How to Run a Small Business	12	73	15
Advocacy Training	12	71	17
TOTAL	154		

Summary

Of the 148 items, there were 11 topics that would be of interest to 40 percent or more of the respondents as shown in Table 20. The four highest program categories in terms of interest were Financial Security, Health and Physical Fitness, Art, and Personal Development. There was only one category, Career Related Topics, that did not meet the criterion of having one topic selected by 33 percent or more respondents. An additional 20 topics met the 33 percent criterion as shown in Table 20. The two topics rated highest in interest were in the Health and Physical Fitness category: Swimming (62 percent), and Exercise Classes (53 percent).

TABLE 20

Specific Topics that were of Interest to One-Third or More of the Respondents

TOPIC	PROGRAM CATEGORY	NUMBER/PERCENT
Swimming	Health and Physical Fitness	62
Exercise Classes	Health and Physical Fitness	53
Travel	Hobbies	48
Nutritional Needs Over 60	Health and Physical Fitness	46
Current Events	The World We Live In	42
Trips to Concerts	Music	42
Cooking for One or Two	Household Management	42
Developing New Friends	Life Coping Skills	40
Handling Legal Matters	Financial Security	40
Tours of Art Museums	Art	40
Biological Aspects of Aging	Health and Physical Fitness	40
Music Appreciation	Music	39
Knitting/Crocheting	Hobbies	38
Understanding Computers	The World We Live In	38
Relaxation	Health and Physical Fitness	38
Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation	Health and Physical Fitness	38
Estates and Wills	Financial Security	38
Local and State Issues	The World We Live In	37
Stress	Life Coping Skills	36
Gourmet Cooking	Hobbies	35
Health Maintenance	Health and Physical Fitness	35
Art Appreciation	Art	35
Problem Solving/ Decision Making	Personal Development	35
Bridge	Hobbies	34
Investing	Financial Security	34
Eating Well for Less	Consumer Competence	34
Foot Care	Medical Concerns	34
Indoor Plants	Household Management	34
Weight Watching	Health and Physical Fitness	33
Medical Benefits	Financial Security	33
Medical Problems Over 60	Medical Concerns	33
Comparative Religions	Spiritualilty	33

Relationships Between Respondent Demographics and Program Topic Interest

The investigator was interested in testing the relationship between the program categories and the demographics of age, educational level and marital status of the respondents. Race was not studied since it was a very homogeneous racial group. Two questions were asked: (1) Is level of interest related to demographic variables? and (2) If so, is this difference in interest program specific?

Age and Program Categories

The mean number of activities checked by respondents in three age groups is indicated in Table 21. The youngest age group tended to check the highest number of items throughout the questionnaire in all categories, and the oldest age group checked the fewest number of activities throughout the questionnaire (See Table 21).

TABLE 21

Mean Number of Activities Checked by Age

Age Group	N	Mean	S.D.
60-69	62	43.76	32.75
70-79	28	29.18	29.97
80+	10	15.20	23.37

An analysis of variance test indicated ($F = 4.765$; $p = .0106$) that there were significant differences in the mean response levels among the age groups (See Table 22).

TABLE 22

One-Way Analysis of Variance on Age Groups and Number of Items

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Prob.
Between Groups	2	9293.6819	4646.8409	4.765	.0106
Within Groups	97	94595.0781	975.2070		
Total	99	103888.7600			

Tests between individual means using Tukey HSD to control for experiment wise error showed that the 60-69 age group was significantly different from the 80+ age group. However, the 70-79 and 80+ age groups and the 60-69 and 70-79 age groups were not significantly different from each other. It was concluded that respondents 60-69 years of age identified a statistically significant greater number of topics of interest than respondents 80 years of age and older.

Table 23 indicates the mean number of items checked by the respondents in the 13 program categories by age. (The number of topics per category ranged from 6-25.) The table indicates the number of items in each category, the total and the mean number of activities checked per category, and the standard deviation. Since the number of items varied among categories, an adjusted mean was also computed by dividing the number of responses by the number of items in the program category and the number of subjects. This adjusted mean reflects the extent that a given topic within a category was checked as being of interest by a respodent. The categories were ranked in terms of these adjusted means.

TABLE 23

Respondent Interest by Age Categories

			60-69 years (N=62)					70-79 years (N=28)					80+ years (N=10)					
Program Category	No. Items	Overall Group Rank	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Totals
Financial Security	11	1	1	245	3.952	3.433	.359	14	170	2.500	3.049	.227	4	13	1.300	1.879	.118	328
Health and Physical Fitness	18	2	2	390	6.290	4.030	.349	3	117	4.179	3.560	.232	10	16	1.600	2.503	.089	523
Art	8	3	8	140	2.258	2.150	.282	1	65	2.321	2.091	.290	1	11	1.100	1.792	.138	216
Personal Development	6	4	3	120	1.935	1.837	.323	2	43	1.536	2.027	.256	11	5	.500	.850	.083	168
Life Coping Skills	11	5	4	204	3.290	3.226	.299	8	61	2.179	2.709	.198	9	10	1.000	2.000	.091	275
Spirituality	6	5	5	109	1.758	1.879	.293	6	37	1.321	1.765	.220	(8)	6	.600	1.265	.100	152
The World We Live In	19	7	7	336	5.419	5.434	.285	7	109	3.893	5.679	.205	6	20	2.000	3.300	.105	465
Medical Concerns	9	8	10	154	2.484	3.012	.276	5	56	2.000	2.694	.222	1	13	1.300	2.541	.144	223
Household Management	7	9	6	124	2.000	2.232	.286	10	35	1.250	1.713	.178	5	8	.800	1.467	.114	167
Consumer Competence	10	10	9	174	2.806	3.018	.281	11	46	1.643	2.438	.164	(8)	10	1.000	1.700	.100	230
Music	10	11	13	163	2.629	2.663	.261	9	50	1.786	2.250	.179	3	12	1.200	2.098	.120	225
Hobbies	25	12	11	420	6.774	5.888	.271	12	109	3.893	4.810	.156	7	26	2.600	4.088	.104	555
Career Related Topics	8	13	12	134	2.161	2.306	.270	13	19	1.335	1.335	.085	12	2	.200	.422	.025	155
TOTALS				2713					817					152				3682

In the 60-69 age range, the four program categories chosen most by this age group were: Financial Security, Health and Physical Fitness, Personal Development, and Life Coping Skills. The 70-79 age group chose the following four categories (at a lower expression of interest): Art, Personal Development, Health and Physical Fitness, and Financial Security. In the 80+ age group, the four highest categories chosen were: Medical Concerns, Art, Music, and Financial Security (See Table 24).

TABLE 24

Rankings of Top Four Program Categories by Age Groups

Category	60-69	70-79	80+
Financial Security	1	4	4
Health and Physical Fitness	2	3	--
Personal Development	3	2	--
Life Coping Skills	4	--	--
Art	--	1	2
Medical Concerns	--	--	1
Music	--	--	3

An analysis of variance was used to test the relationship between age group and the level of interest in each of the program categories. Three significant differences among age groups for three categories were found. These were in the areas of Health and Physical Fitness, Career

Related Topics, and Hobbies (see Tables 25 through 30).

In Health and Physical Fitness, the mean scores for the three age groups are shown in Table 25.

TABLE 25

Mean Scores by Age Group for Health and Physical Fitness Topics

Age Group	N	Mean	S.D.
60-69	62	6.29	4.03
70-79	28	4.18	3.56
80+	10	1.60	2.50

The F test indicated ($p = .0006$) that there were significant differences in the mean response level among the age groups (see Table 26). From the Tukey HSD tests, the youngest group of subjects (60-69) checked a significantly larger number of items (6.29) than the other two groups. The other two age groups were not significantly different from each other.

TABLE 26

One-Way Analysis of Variance on Age Groups and Interest in Health and Physical Fitness

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Prob.
Between Groups	2	232.4287	116.2143	8.114	.0006
Within Groups	97	1389.2813	14.3225		
Total	99	1652.7100			

In Career Related Topics, the mean scores for the three groups are presented in Table 27.

TABLE 27

Mean Scores by Age Groups for Career Related Topics

Age Group	N	Mean	S.D.
60-69	62	2.16	2.31
70-79	28	.68	1.33
80+	10	.20	.42

The F test indicated (p = .0005) that there were significant differences in the mean response level among the age groups (See Table 28).

Tests between individual means using Turkey-HSD show that the 70-79 and 80+ age groups were not significantly different from each other, but both were significantly different from the 60-69 age group. Thus the youngest group (60-69) checked a significantly larger number of items in the Career Related category (2.1) than did other age groups (See Table 28).

TABLE 28

One-Way Analysis of Variance on Age Groups and Interest in Career Related Topics

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Prob.
Between Groups	2	62.6558	31.3279	8.123	.0005
Within Groups	97	343.094281	3.8566		
Total	99				

In the Hobbies Category, the mean scores for the three groups are presented in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Mean Scores by Age Groups for Hobbies Topics

Age Group	N	Mean	S.D.
60-69	62	6.77	5.89
70-79	28	3.89	4.81
80+	10	2.60	4.09

The F test indicated (p = .0161) that there were significant differences in the mean level of response among the age groups (See Table 30).

TABLE 30

One-Way Analysis of Variance on Age Groups and Interest in Hobbies Topics

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Prob.
Between Groups	2	256.8327	128.4164	4.310	.0161
Within Groups	97	2889.9173	29.7930		
Total	99	3146.7500			

Post hoc follow-up tests of all pair wise mean comparisons using

Tukey-HSD procedure did not reveal where the differences were. This indicated that there was an undetermined complex comparison that was significant.

Educational Level and Program Categories

The mean number of activities checked and standard deviation by women with different levels of education are shown in Table 31. The Professional/Graduate Degree educational level women responded to the most activities and the Some College/Vocational School respondents expressed the least interest (See Table 31). Since the number of respondents in the "Other Certificate" category was only 3, it was too small to use in further analysis.

TABLE 31

Mean Number of Activities Checked by Educational Level

Educational Level	N	MEAN	S.D.
Grade School	6	34.17	29.96
High School/GED	15	31.20	26.34
Some College/Vocational School	41	31.12	29.23
College Degree	22	42.68	35.66
Professional/Graduate Degree	13	51.46	41.37

A one-way analysis of variance test revealed that there was no significant differences among the mean responses of the various educational level groups (See Table 32).

TABLE 32

One-Way Analysis of Variance on Educational Levels and Number of Items

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Prob.
Between Groups	4	5387.8162	1346.9541	1.308	.2730
Within Groups	92	94759.6271	1029.9959		
Total	96	100147.4433			

In Table 33, the mean number of items checked by the respondents in various educational levels is indicated. The table indicates the rank, the number of items in each category, the mean number of activities checked, and the standard deviation. The categories were ranked after computing an adjusted mean which took into account the number of possible choices in each category.

TABLE 33

Respondent Interest by Educational Categories

Program Category	No. Items	Overall Group Rank	Grade School (N=6) Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	High School/GED (N=15) Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Some College/Vocational (N=41) Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean
Financial Security	11	1	9	13	2.17	2.64	.197	8	35	2.33	2.55	.212	1	129	3.15	3.31	.286
Health and Physical Fitness	18	2	4	33	5.50	4.93	.306	5	62	4.13	2.92	.230	2	200	4.88	4.16	.271
Art	8	3	7	11	1.83	1.72	.229	4	28	1.87	1.89	.233	3	79	1.93	2.14	.241
Personal Development	6	4	8	8	1.33	1.21	.222	(1)	24	1.60	1.50	.267	4	56	1.37	1.69	.228
Life Coping Skills	11	5	5	18	3.00	2.45	.273	13	27	1.80	2.31	.164	8	89	2.17	2.89	.197
Spirituality	6	5	11	6	1.00	2.00	.167	9	17	1.13	1.55	.189	5	54	1.32	1.77	.220
The World We Live In	19	7	6	28	4.67	6.31	.246	11	49	3.27	3.88	.172	6	161	3.93	4.87	.207
Medical Concerns	9	8	1	23	3.83	3.37	.426	7	29	1.93	2.40	.215	12	64	1.56	2.41	.173
Household Management	7	9	2	14	2.33	2.73	.333	(1)	28	1.87	1.77	.267	10	53	1.29	1.81	.185
Consumer Competence	10	10	10	11	1.83	2.86	.183	10	27	1.80	2.24	.180	9	79	1.93	2.67	.193
Music	10	11	13	6	1.00	1.27	.100	3	37	2.47	2.85	.247	7	83	2.02	2.25	.202
Hobbies	25	12	12	19	3.17	3.71	.127	6	85	5.67	5.95	.227	11	186	4.54	3.81	.181
Career Related Topics	8	13	3	15	2.50	2.59	.313	12	20	1.33	2.02	.167	13	43	1.05	1.87	.131
TOTALS				205					468					1276			

TABLE 33 (continued)

			College Degree (N=22)					Prof/Grad Degree (N=13)					Other Certificate (N=3)					
Program Category	No. Items	Overall Group Rank	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Totals
Financial Security	11	1	1	89	4.05	3.51	.689	5	52	4.00	4.08	.364	(5)	10	3.33	3.22	.303	328
Health and Physical Fitness	18	2	6	117	5.32	3.91	.295	3	92	7.08	4.66	.393	3	19	6.22	4.16	.352	523
Art	8	3	5	52	2.36	2.04	.296	2	44	3.36	2.50	.423	12	2	.67	.58	.083	216
Personal Development	6	4	10	36	1.64	1.97	.272	1	41	3.15	2.48	.527	11	3	1.00	0	.167	168
Life Coping Skills	11	5	3	76	3.46	3.54	.314	4	55	4.23	3.47	.385	(5)	10	3.33	3.06	.303	275
Spirituality	6	5	2	44	2.00	1.93	.333	7	27	2.08	2.10	.346	9	4	1.33	1.16	.222	152
The World We Live In	19	7	4	129	5.86	6.45	.309	8	85	6.54	6.23	.344	10	13	4.33	5.77	.228	465
Medical Concerns	9	8	9	56	2.55	3.26	.283	6	41	3.15	3.26	.350	1	10	3.33	4.93	.370	223
Household Management	7	9	7	45	2.05	2.19	.292	13	22	1.69	2.59	.242	8	5	1.67	2.89	.238	167
Consumer Competence	10	10	8	63	2.85	3.08	2.86	10	39	3.00	3.06	.300	2	11	3.67	5.51	.367	230
Music	10	11	11	58	2.64	2.61	.264	12	33	2.54	3.33	.254	7	8	2.67	2.89	.267	225
Hobbies	25	12	12	132	6.00	5.71	.24	9	111	8.54	7.87	.342	6	22	7.33	8.51	.293	555
Career Related Topics	8	13	13	42	1.91	2.20	.239	11	27	2.08	2.25	.260	4	8	2.67	.289	.333	155
TOTALS				939					669					125				3682

Table 34 indicates the rankings of the top four program categories by educational level.

TABLE 34

Rankings of Top Four Program Categories by Educational Level Groups

Program Category	Grade	H.S.	College	College Degree	Prof/ Grad	Other
Medical Concerns	1	--	--	--	--	--
Household Management	2	2	--	--	--	--
Career	3	--	--	--	--	4
Health and Physical Fitness	4	--	2	--	3	3
Personal Development	--	1	4	--	1	--
Music	--	3	--	--	--	--
Art	--	4	3	--	2	--
Financial Security	--	--	1	1	--	--
Spirituality	--	--	--	2	--	--
Life Coping Skills	--	--	--	3	4	--
The World We Live In	--	--	--	4	--	--
Consumer Competence	--	--	--	--	--	2

To test for the relationship between education and level of response within each of the thirteen categories, a one-way analysis of variance was run. Only one category, Personal Development, showed significant

difference among the five educational levels. This is shown in Table 36. The Professional/Graduate Degree respondents checked more items in the Personal Development category (3.2) than respondents of other educational levels (See Table 35).

TABLE 35

Mean Scores by Educational Level for Personal Development Topics

Educational Level	N	MEAN	S.D.
Grade School	6	1.33	1.21
High School/GED	15	1.60	1.50
Some College/Vocational School	41	1.37	1.68
College Degree	22	1.64	1.97
Professional/Graduate Degree	13	3.15	2.48

TABLE 36

One-Way Analysis of Variance on Educational Levels and Interest in Personal Development

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Prob.
Between Groups	4	33.1012	8.2753	2.478	.0494
Within Groups	92	307.2287	3.3394		
Total	96	340.3299			

Marital Status and Program Categories

Table 37 provides the mean number of activites checked and standard deviation by three marital status groups.

TABLE 37

Mean Number Activities Checked by Marital Status

Marital Status	N	Mean	S.D.
Married	38	37.16	33.71
Single	34	37.71	30.19
Widowed	28	35.29	34.25

One-way analysis of variance test revealed that there were no significant differences between the means in the different marital status groups (See Table 38).

TABLE 38

One-Way Analysis of Variance on Martial Status and Number of Items

Source of Variance	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Prob.
Between Groups	2	96.9343	48.4671	.045	.9557
Within Groups	97	103791.8257	1070.0188		
Total	99	103888.7600			

Table 39 presents the mean number activities chosen by respondents by program category and marital status. The table indicates the rank of number of items in each category, the mean number of activities checked, and the standard deviation. The categories were ranked after computing an adjusted mean which takes into account the number of items in each category.

TABLE 39

Mean Number Activities Chosen by Respondents by Category and Marital Status

			Married (N=38)					Single (N=34)					Widowed (N=28)					
Program Category	No. Items	Overall Group Rank	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Rank	Total Resp.	Mean	S.D.	Adj. Mean	Totals
Financial Security	11	1	1	130	3.42	3.27	.311	4	105	3.09	3.19	.281	1	93	3.32	3.61	.256	328
Health and Physical Fitness	18	2	2	207	5.45	3.94	.303	1	187	5.50	3.88	.306	(4)	129	4.61	4.45	.256	523
Art	8	3	7	75	1.97	2.15	.247	3	77	2.27	1.83	.283	2	64	2.29	2.42	.285	216
Personal Development	6	4	3	67	1.76	2.02	.294	2	60	1.77	1.69	.294	6	41	1.46	1.80	.244	168
Life Coping Skills	11	5	5	110	2.90	3.29	.263	10	86	2.53	2.60	.230	(4)	79	2.82	3.38	.256	275
Spirituality	6	5	4	66	1.74	2.02	.290	7	52	1.53	1.58	.255	10	34	1.21	1.81	.202	152
The World We Live In	19	7	10	167	4.40	5.46	.231	5	176	5.18	5.46	.273	8	122	4.36	5.41	.229	465
Medical Concerns	9	8	9	83	2.18	2.63	.243	6	79	2.32	3.05	.258	7	61	2.18	3.09	.242	223
Household Management	7	9	8	65	1.71	1.96	.244	11	54	1.59	2.06	.227	5	48	1.71	2.28	.245	167
Consumer Competence	10	10	13	79	2.08	2.90	.208	12	75	2.21	2.37	.221	3	76	2.71	3.30	.271	230
Music	10	11	6	95	2.50	2.64	.250	8	82	2.41	2.60	.241	12	48	1.71	2.31	.171	225
Hobbies	25	12	12	202	5.32	5.49	.213	9	201	5.99	5.99	.239	9	152	5.43	5.57	.217	555
Career Related Topics	8	13	11	66	1.74	2.26	.217	13	48	1.41	1.78	.177	11	41	1.46	2.29	.183	155
TOTALS				1340					914					1188				3682

Table 40 indicates the rankings of the top four program categories by marital status.

TABLE 40

Rankings of Top Four Program Categories by Marital Status Groups

Program Category	Married	Single	Widowed
Financial Security	1	4	1
Health and Physical Fitness	2	1	(4)
Personal Development	3	2	--
Spirituality	4	--	--
Art	--	3	2
Consumer Competence	--	--	3
Life Coping Skills	--	--	(4)

There were no program categories where significant differences in interest occurred among the three marital status groups.

Relationship Among Program Categories

The Pearson Correlation Coefficients (See Table 41) indicate the correlation between the respondents' interest in one program category with each of the 12 other categories. With the exception of art, there was a fairly high (.50) correlation between interest in one area and interest in other areas.

All correlation coefficients were significant at the .05 level. The

highest correlation (r=.8084) was between interest in Consumer Competence and interest in Household Management topics; approximately 65 percent of the variance in interest in Consumer Competence can be explained by having an interest in Household Management. The lowest correlation was .2769 for Art and Health and Physical Fitness. Only seven percent of the variance in interest in Art can be explained by having interest in Health and Physical Fitness.

Overall, interest in 12 of the 13 program categories was highly inter-correlated in this sample of women 60 years of age and older. Persons having an interest in art, however, were not inclined to be interested in other subjects. The question of whether these findings are due to an underlying response set or a genuine interest of older women in many subject areas requires further study.

TABLE 41

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among Program Categories

	H,PF	FIN SEC	SPIRT	PER DEV	LIFE COP SK	MED CON	HSLD MGMT	CON COM	CAR REL	ART	MUSIC	WWL	HOBB
Health and Physical Fitness		.6596	.5507	.6076	.7495	.6902	.6316	.7565	.6302	.2769	.4881	.6298	.5934
Financial Security			.6272	.5979	.7031	.5886	.7158	.7408	.6635	.4026	.5931	.7232	.7096
Spirituality				.5673	.6410	.5210	.6492	.5904	.5779	.4414	.6102	.7035	.5830
Personal Development					.6181	.4743	.5725	.6085	.6021	.4895	.5196	.6123	.6158
Life Coping Skills						.7239	.6737	.7937	.6934	.3771	.4721	.6948	.6857
Medical Concerns							.7311	.7181	.4930	.2944	.4684	.6681	.6631
Household Management								.8084	.6222	.4339	.6940	.7171	.8079
Consumer Competence									.6653	.3544	.6109	.7314	.7486
Career Related Topics										.2783	.5133	.6755	.6532
Art											.5290	.4766	.5109
The World We Live In												.6212	.7360
Hobbies													.6805

Note: All correlations were significant at the .05 level.

Other Findings

Age Segregated Classes

Respondents were asked if they preferred participating in classes or programs with both younger and older people together or with people of their own age. A large percentage of the respondents (70 percent) were interested in participating in classes with younger and older people together, while 21 percent preferred participating in classes with people of their own age alone (See Table 42).

TABLE 42

Participation in Classes with Own Age/Mixed Age Group

	Number/Percent
Prefer Classes with Own Age	21
Prefer Classes with Younger and Older People Together	70
No Response	9

Respondents' Preferences for Programs by Season, Day, Time

The most convenient times for the respondents to participate in activities at the YWCA are reported in Table 43. Respondents were able to choose more than one category. It appears that people prefer fall and spring to winter and summer. Weekdays and morning times were also most preferred.

TABLE 43

Preferences for Participation in YMCA Programs by Season, Day, and Time

Preference for:	Number/Percent
Season	
Fall	78
Spring	68
Winter	59
Summer	41
No Response	16
Day	
Weekdays	71
Either Weekdays/Weekends	20
Weekends	9
No Response	12
Time of Day	
Morning	70
Afternoon	49
Lunch time	32
Evening	18
No Response	14

Respondents' Preferred Methods of Learning

Classes and lectures were by far the preferred ways of learning for the respondents (See Table 44). Sixty-four percent endorsed classes and 62 percent endorsed lectures as preferred methods of learning. In contrast, computers was the least preferred method of learning. Again, respondents were able to choose more than one category.

TABLE 44

Preferred Methods of Learning

Method	Number/Percent
Classes	64
Lectures	62
Film Series	49
Group Discussions/Seminars	48
Tours	40
Workshops	39
Clubs/Study Groups	25
Computer	3
No response	9

Interest in Academic Programs

Respondents were asked whether they were interested in having the YWCA provide information on programs leading to a high school diploma or a college degree. The majority of the respondents (72 percent) were not interested in this information, although six percent did indicate an interest; 22 percent did not respond to the question.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Purpose and Methodology

Older adults constitute a growing segment of the American population. It is projected that the number of adults over 60 will grow until it reaches a peak in the early twenty-first century. With the increasing potential for a longer and more active life, along with the trend for early retirement, the increase of leisure time, and the need to cope with a rapidly changing society, it seems inevitable that all adults will need to learn how to cope with these and other changes. These factors have implications for lifelong learning and for designing and providing continuing education programs for older adults.

The major purposes of this research project were (1) to describe the educational interests of women 60 years of age and older and (2) to test the relationships between the respondents' age, educational level and marital status and their program preferences.

The subjects selected for this study were women who were current members of the Minneapolis (Minnesota) Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) who were 60 years of age or older. There were 383 members of the YWCA who were in this age range at the time of the study. It was decided to do a random sample of approximately one-half of this population (N=200). The sample was selected through the use of random numbers.

A self-administered questionnaire was developed as the research tool. The questionnaire contained 148 items which were grouped in 13

program categories. The respondents were asked to respond to the items by checking whether they (1) would attend, or (2) would not attend. While six respondents accepted the invitation to complete the questionnaire in the YWCA offices, 94 of the respondents received and returned a questionnaire in the mail. There was a 50 percent (N=100) response to the survey. Results of the survey were analyzed by computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences at the University of Minnesota.

This chapter will present a summary of the findings of the study, and suggest implications for educators of older adults.

Summary of the Findings

Characteristics of the Respondents

The "typical" respondent was Caucasian, between the ages of 60-69, and had completed some college. Women between the ages of 60-69 comprised 62 percent of the respondents. In terms of the highest level of school completed, 41 percent of the respondents had completed some college/vocational school, while 22 percent had completed a baccalaureate degree and an additional 13 percent had completed a professional or graduate degree. Ninety-eight percent of the women were Caucasian. The marital status of the women was fairly evenly distributed with the highest percentage (38 percent) being married. Twenty-two percent of the respondents reported participating in activities at the Minneapolis YWCA one to two times per year, and 17 percent indicated they attended activities more than once a week. One-half (50 percent)

of the respondents indicated they participated most often in recreational activities and 33 percent most often participated in classes.

Educational Interests of Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of interest in 148 topics. When asked if they were interested in a program on each topic, their response choices were (1) I would attend, or (2) I would not attend. A No Response was recorded if neither I would attend nor I would not attend response was checked.

The 148 topics were grouped into 13 program categories for analysis. By analyzing the frequency of responses to the 148 topics within the 13 categories, the program categories were rank ordered; an adjusted mean was computed which took into account the different numbers of items in each category. The 13 categories were ranked in the following order:

1. Financial Security
2. Health and Physical Fitness
3. Art
4. Personal Development
5. Life Coping Skills
5. Spirituality
7. The World We Live In
8. Medical Concerns
9. Household Management
10. Consumer Competence

11. Music

12. Hobbies

13. Career Related Topics

Thirty-two of the 148 topics were checked by 33 percent or more of the respondents as a program that "I would attend." The program topics identified are shown in Table 20, page 73.

Eight topics from the Health and Physical Fitness category were rated high in interest. All program categories except Career Related Topics had one or more topics which met the criterion of being of interest to one-third or more of the respondents; however, Volunteer Opportunities and Careers in Retirement included in the Career Related Topics Category, were selected by 32 percent and 31 percent respectively.

Relationships Between Demographic Characteristics and Program Preference

Tests were done to test the relationship between (1) age, (2) educational level, and (3) marital status with the level of interest shown in each of the 13 program categories. When a statistically significant difference (p=.05) was found in the extent of interest expressed by different demographic variable categories, additional tests were done to identify which category(ies) of the demographic variable accounted for the differences in interest.

Age.-The youngest age group (60-69) checked the most items and the oldest age group (80+) checked the fewest number of activities as programs "I would attend." An analysis of variance test found a signi-

ficant difference (F=4.77, p=.01) in the interests among respondents when grouped in three age categories. The 60-69 age group identified significantly more program interests than did the 80+ age group. Significant differences among age groups were found in two categories: Health and Physical Fitness and Career Related Topics. The youngest age group checked significantly more items in these categories than other age groups. The other two groups were not significantly different from each other. A significant difference among groups were also found in the Hobbies category, but the Tukey HSD tests of all pair wise comparisons did not reveal where the differences were.

The categories reported as having the highest interest to the 60-69 age group (N=62) were: Financial Security, Health and Physical Fitness, Personal Development, and Life Coping Skills. The 70-79 age group (N=28) was most interested in the following categories: Art, Personal Development, Health and Physical Fitness, and Financial Security. And, the 80+ age group (N=10) chose: Medical Concerns, Art, Music, and Financial Security as the program categories having most interest to them.

Educational Level.-Regarding educational level, the Professional/ Graduate Degree women responded to the most activities throughout the total questionnaire of any group, although the difference among groups was not statistically significant. In one category, they checked a significantly (p=.049) larger number of items in one category (Personal Development) than women in other educational levels. The other educational level groups were not significantly different from each other.

The categories of highest interest to the Professional/Graduate Degree women (N=13) were Personal Development, Art, Health and Physical Fitness, and Life Coping Skills. The highest interest categories for the group with Some College/Vocational School (N=41) were Financial Security, Health and Physical Fitness, Art, and Personal Development. (This group comprised the largest percentage of women in educational levels).

The programs of highest interest to the College Degree level (N=22) were Financial Security, Spirituality, Life Coping Skills, and The World We Live In.

The Other Certificate group (N=3) reported the following categories of highest interest: Medical Concerns, Consumer Competence, Health and Physical Fitness, and Career Related Topics.

The High School level group (N=15) chose Household Management, Personal Development, Music, and Art.

The Grade School level group (N=6) reported the following categories of highest interest: Personal Development, Household Management, Music, and Art.

Marital Status.-There was no significant difference in the number of items checked among the respondents in three marital status groups, nor in their extent of interest in specific categories.

The Married group (N=38) chose the following program categories of highest interest: Financial Security, Health and Physical Fitness, Personal Development, and Spirituality.

The Single group (N=34) chose Health and Physical Fitness, Personal

Development, Art, and Financial Security.

The Widowed group (N=28) chose Financial Security, Art, Consumer Competence, Health and Physical Fitness, and Life Coping Skills. (Health and Physical Fitness and Life Coping Skills received equal level of interest from the respondents).

Other Findings

The majority of the respondents (70 percent) preferred attending classes with younger and older people together. The preferred seasons for participating in programs at the YWCA were fall and spring, with fall being the most popular (fall = 78 percent and spring = 68 percent). Weekdays and mornings were preferred by 70 percent of the respondents as to the day and time of offerings. The preferred methods of learning were classes (64 percent) and lectures (62 percent). This particular sample showed almost no interest in computer learning; three percent preferred this method of learning.

The Pearson Correlation Coefficients indicated the correlation between the respondents' interest in one program category with each of the 12 other categories. Overall, interest in 12 of the 13 program categories was highly inter-correlated (r=.4743 to .8084) in this sample of women 60 years of age and older. Persons having an interest in art, however, were not inclined to be interested in other subjects. The highest correlation was Consumer Competence and Household Management (r=.8084), and the lowest correlation was Art and Health and Physical Fitness (r=.2769). The question of whether these findings are due to an underlying response set or a genuine relationship among interests of older women in many subject areas requires further study.

Implications of the Study

This study has implications for educators and other helping professionals who are involved with planning educational programs for older adults and who are involved in research and evaluation.

Implications for Program Planners

The study methodology and findings can be of use to educational program planners working with older adults in terms of decisions about needs assessment, course selection, program design questions, and administrative supports.

A compelling justification for surveying the interests of a programs's clientele is supported by the theory of andragogy ... "this is that the very act of asking individuals to state their preferences involves them in the program planning process, gives them a sense of influencing decisions that affect them, and makes them feel a part of a mutual undertaking" (Knowles, 1980). Knowles observes that from this point of view, one might say that good program promotion starts with involving potential participants in interest assessment.

The questionnaire/survey used in this study is one data collection technique that can obtain information about interests of older adults (women over 60) who were members of a YWCA as a source of information for adult education program planning. While several different techniques such as telephone surveys, questionnaires, and interviews can be used, a mailed, self-administered questionnaire produced responses from 50 percent of the members whereas requests to complete the questionnaire

in the YWCA offices resulted in only six completed questionnaires.

Implications for planning educational programs for older women can be drawn from this study. These pertain to intergenerational programming; relationships between individuals' age, educational level and marital status and their interest in various program topics; and specific program topics of most interest to this sample.

Intergenerational programming was important to these women; thus, classes should be offered for older and younger people together. However, interest in program topics was associated with age. The program topics that most likely would draw an intergenerational audience based on this study are in Art and Financial Security. Program topics that would be least likely to attract women from all the age groups would be in the categories of Health and Physical Fitness, Personal Development, and Career Related Topics.

Planners should be aware of significant differences in interests among different age groups. In terms of numbers of interests, the youngest age group (60-69) was the most interested and the oldest age group (80+) was the least interested. The 60-69 age group showed a significantly greater level of interest in three program categories: Health and Physical Fitness, Career Related Topics, and Hobbies. The top four program categories for the 60-69 age group were: Financial Security, Health and Physical Fitness, Personal Development, and Life Coping Skills. The top four program categories of interest for the 70-79 age group were: Art, Personal Development, Health and Physical Fitness, and Financial Security. The 80+ age group was most interested

in: Medical Concerns, Art, Music, and Financial Security. Educational activities should be planned and targeted for these age groups considering this information.

There is no significant difference in interests among women having different levels of education except for the Personal Development category. Thus, it would not be necessary to target the delivery of a program for a particular group based on educational level except for Professional/Graduate Degree women and courses related to Personal Development. A program offering in Personal Development targeted to this educational group could be planned for evenings when these people would have access to the program.

It would not be necessary to plan programs towards a particular marital status group; there were no significant differences found among married, single and widowed women.

Program planners should also note the eleven specific topics that were of interest to 40 percent or more of the respondents, which were: Swimming, Exercise Classes, Travel, Nutritional Needs over 60, Current Events, Biological Aspects of Aging, Developing New Friends, Handling Legal Matters, Trips to Concerts, Tours of Art Museums, and Cooking for One or Two. There were an additional 21 topics which met the criterion of being of interest to 33 percent or more of the respondents (shown in Table 20, page 73). The top four program categories were: Financial Security, Health and Physical Fitness, Art, and Personal Development. The specific topics of highest interest were in the Health and Physical Fitness program category; they were: Swimming and Exercise Classes.

Swimming was the highest ranked topic overall; it was reported to be of interest to 62 percent of the respondents.

The women in this study showed a high correlation of interest among all program categories except for Art. Overall, interest in 12 of the 13 program categories was highly correlated in this sample. Women having an interest in Art, however, tended not to be interested in other subjects. It is important to recognize the "independence" of the women interested in Art only. There was a high correlation between Consumer Competence and Household Management. Classes falling under these two program categories would be advertised or promoted in classes under the other program category. Also, classes could be promoted in all areas to all current students because of the high correlation of interest in all areas.

It would be important to concentrate courses in the fall and spring, especially the fall, and during the weekdays and in the mornings. The agency should offer primarily classes and lectures, since this was the reported learning method of highest interest to this sample although film series, group discussions and tours were important to this group (49 percent, 48 percent and 40 percent respectively).

Regarding implications for administrative supports, there are several areas that could be explored. The following suggestions relate to program development and implementaton:

1. Establish an advisory committee of women of all ages so that each age group is represented. This group would be involved with needs assessment, program planning, and course promotion.

2. Involve older members of the YWCA in the teaching/facilitation of learning experiences at the YWCA. Adults are a vast resource of knowledge that could be drawn upon in teaching classes to other older adults and mixed groups.
3. This needs assessment information can be used to show support and need for a special program for older adults. It is important to have public understanding of a program and its accomplishments.
4. Use revenue obtained from courses offered to younger adults (who would attend in greater numbers) to support special courses and support services for the women aged 70 and older.
5. Involve the learners in needs/interest assessment. Involving the learners in interest assessment gives them a sense of influencing decision making, makes them feel a part of a mutual undertaking, and is good program promotion practice.

Implications for Further Research

This study included only women and their educational interests. Thus, a researcher might consider surveying men and women toegether or separately regarding their interests in educational programs.

The subjects were drawn from one membership organization; thus, findings cannot be generalized to all older women. Future researchers could use area sampling or sample members from many organizations in different geographical areas so as to be able to generalize the findings to all older adults.

The response rate for this study was only 50 percent. An investigator might consider alternative methods for reaching a higher percentage

of the sample. For example, personal and/or telephone interviewing may be appropriate.

The length of the questionnaire may be a concern. A researcher might consider having the respondent name classes or programs they would be interested in rather than having them respond to an existing list of topics and classes.

Concluding Note

This study has gathered information on educational interests of women 60 years of age and older. The data revealed some trends regarding the respondents themselves and their program preferences. A "typical" older particpatnt of YWCA programs is between the ages of 60-69, Caucasian, married and has an educational level of some college/ vocational school. She prefers classes in the fall and spring, in the mornings, and during the week. She often participates in recreational activities at the YWCA. She prefers classes and lectures to other methods of learning and she enjoys/prefers classes with younger and older people together, rather than with older people alone.

The results of this study indicate the need for more reseach about older adults. A researcher might be interested in surveying how other older adults would respond to the same survey, in determining if other older adults would respond in a similar manner regarding intergenera-tional programming and topics of high interest, in surveying men and women together to see what differences (if any) exist between men's and women's educational interests.

The study does point out that this particular group of respondents were not as interested in the Hobbies area (this is ranked next to last) as one might expect. It is generally assumed that women, especially older women, are interested in hobby and craft activities.

Thus, the study points out that older adults -- like all adults -- are individuals and cannot be regarded as a homogenous group. For adult educators, this reaffirms the importance of having data about individual interests in learning in the educational planning process.

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APPENDIX A

RE: Methodological Protocol # 1 .

Dear Ms. De Jong:

Your Methodological Protocol Request for Approval was received in the Committee office on May 4, 1982 , and has been administratively approved on May 6, 1982 as within the guidelines of referenced Methodological Protocol.

I would like to remind you that it is the responsibility of the investigator to bring to the attention of the Committee any propos change in the project or any emergent problems that will affect human subjects.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Anne Munro

Anne Munro
Executive Secretary to the
Committee on the Use of Human
Subjects in Research

APPENDIX B

An Assessment of Educational Interests of Women Over 60

(c.1-3)
cd.#1(c.4)

We at the YWCA are very excited about programs and activities that could be developed for women at the downtown YWCA. Please look through the following list of possible topics for programs (lectures, workshops, classes, discussion groups, tours, film series, clubs).

If transportation were no problem, the cost affordable, and the time of the program convenient, please indicate your interest in attending these programs by checking (1) I would attend the program listed; or (2) I would not attend the program listed. For each item please check column 1 or 2. This questionnaire should be returned to the Women's Resource Center at the downtown YWCA. Thank you.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL FITNESS	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Health Maintenance	_____	_____ (col.5-25)
Weight Watching	_____	_____
Aerobics	_____	_____
Exercise Classes	_____	_____
Yoga	_____	_____
Swimming	_____	_____
Cross Country Skiing	_____	_____
Special Diets	_____	_____
Food Fads	_____	_____
Vitamins	_____	_____
Nutritional Needs Over 60	_____	_____
Biological Aspects of Aging	_____	_____
Menopause	_____	_____
Sexuality: Sex after 60	_____	_____
First Aid	_____	_____
Home Nursing Skills	_____	_____
Relaxation	_____	_____
CPR (Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation)	_____	_____
Other Topics of Interest: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

FINANCIAL SECURITY	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Social Security		(col.26-40)
Estates and Wills		
Medical Benefits		
Health Care Costs		
Income Tax		
Insurance Options		
Understanding the Stock Market		
Understanding the Economy		
Investing		
Money Management/Budgeting		
Financial Planning		
Other Topics of Interest:		

SPIRITUALITY	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Women in Religion		(col.41-49)
Comparative Religions		
Personal Religious Philosophy		
Understanding Theology		
Philosophy		
Ethics and Values		
Other Topics of Interest:		

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Assertiveness	_____	_____ (col.50-58)
Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills	_____	_____
Self Defense	_____	_____
Writing Fiction	_____	_____
Writing Non-Fiction	_____	_____
Speed Reading	_____	_____
Other Topics of Interest: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

LIFE COPING SKILLS	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Death, Dying and Bereavement	_____	_____ (col.59-73)
Depression	_____	_____
Loneliness	_____	_____
Widowhood	_____	_____
Relocation	_____	_____
Stress	_____	_____
Living with Relatives/Family	_____	_____
Developing New Friends	_____	_____
Personal Illness and Disease	_____	_____
Dealing with Illness and Disease of Others	_____	_____
Handling Legal Matters	_____	_____
Other Topics of Interest: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

MEDICAL CONCERNS	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Medical Problems Over 60			(col.73-80)
Your Doctor and You			
Chemical Abuse			
Foot Care			
Heart Disease			
Cancer			
Hypertension			
Medications			(c.1-3)
Is It Aging or Disease?			cd.#2(c.5-8)
Other Topics of Interest:_____			
_____			
_____			

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Home Safety			(col.9-18)
Interior Decorating			
Winterizing Your Home			
Maintenance and Home Repairs			
Yard Maintenance			
Indoor Plants			
Cooking for One or Two			
Other Topics of Interest:_____			
_____			
_____			

CONSUMER COMPETENCE	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Buying and Selling a Home		(col.19-31)
Automobile Maintenance		
Small Appliance Maintenance		
Quacks, Frauds and Con Artists		
Housing Options		
Eating Well for Less		
Efficient Energy Use		
Funeral Arrangements		
Utilizing Social Services		
Selecting a Long-Term Care Facility		
Other Topics of Interest:_____		
_____		
_____		

CAREER RELATED TOPICS	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Careers in Retirement		(col.32-42)
Preparing for Retirement		
Work Opportunities		
Obtaining a Job		
How to Run a Small Business		
Volunteer Opportunities		
Advocacy Training		
Leadership Training		
Other Topics of Interest:_____		
_____		
_____		

ART	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Art Appreciation		(col.43-53)
Art History		
Drawing/Sketching		
Water Color		
Sculpture		
Oil Painting		
Fabric Art		
Tours of Art Museums		
Other Topics of Interest:_____		
_____		
_____		

MUSIC	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Music Appreciation		(col.54-66)
Trips to Concerts		
Music Instrument Lessons (Specify_____)		
Voice Lessons		
Contemporary Music		
Classical Music		
Opera		
Sing-a-longs		
Community Chorus		
Community Band/Orchestra		
Other Topics of Interest:_____		
_____		
_____		

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Third World Countries			(col.67-80)
Current Events			
Understanding Computers			
Computers in the Home			
Ecology			
Solar Energy			
Nuclear Energy			
National Defense and Security			
National Political Issues			
International Political Issues			
Local and State Issues			
The Economy			
Racial/Ethnic Issues			
Women and Public Leadership			
You and Your Future			(c.1-3) cd.#3(c.4)
Human Abuse			
Aging: Myths and Stereotypes			(c.5-12)
Public Policy and Aging			
Intergenerational Issues			
Other Topics of Interest:_____			
_____			
_____			

Although the YWCA does not typically offer programs leading to a high school diploma or college degrees, the YWCA staff would be happy to refer you to convenient locations where you can pursue these interests. Please check whether or not you are interested in this type of information: (col. 13)

_____Yes, I am interested in this information

_____No, I am not interested in this information

HOBBIES	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend (col. 14-41)
Antiques		
Needlework		
Knitting/Crocheting		
Quilting		
Weaving		
Jewelry Making		
Photography		
Woodworking		
Furniture Refinishing		
Stamp Collecting		
Coin Collecting		
Flower Arranging		
Gardening		
Bird Watching		
Gourmet Cooking		
Ethnic Cooking		
Ceramics/Pottery		
Astrology		
Travel		
Bowling		
Dancing (Specify_____)		
Backgammon		
Bridge		
Chess		
Other Card Games (Specify_____)		
Other Topics of Interest:_____		

_____

_____

133 ____(c.1-3)
cd.#4(c.4)

Please complete the following information for our use in program planning.
Any information on this form will be kept confidential.

1. What is your present age? (please check one) (col.5-9)

____Under 60 (1)

____60 - 69 (2)

____70 - 79 (3)

____80+ (4)

2. Sex:

____Female (1)

____Male (2)

3. Race:

____Caucasian (1)

____Black (2)

____Hispanic (3)

____Oriental (4)

____American Indian (5)

____Other (specify)_____ (6)

4. What is your marital status?

____Married (1)

____Widowed (2)

____Single (3)

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

____Grade School (1)

____High School Graduate or GED (2)

____Some College/Vocational School (3)

____College Degree (4)

____Professional/Graduate Degree (5)

____Other Certificate (6)

6. Are you currently working outside the home for pay? (col.10-14)

____Yes (1)

____No (2)

7. Are you currently a YWCA volunteer?

____Yes (1)

____No (2)

If no, are you interested in being a volunteer?

____Yes (3)

____No (4)

8. How often do you participate in activities at the YWCA? (please check one)

____Once or twice a year (1)

____3 - 10 times a year (2)

____Once a month (3)

____More than once a month (4)

____Once a week (5)

____More than once a week (6)

9. How far do you live from the YWCA? (please estimate and check one)

____Less than 1 mile (1)

____1 - 2 miles (2)

____3 - 4 miles (3)

____5 - 6 miles (4)

____over 6 miles (5)

10. What is your principal means of transportation? (please check one)

____Drive (1)

____Bus (2)

____Taxi (3)

____Walk (4)

____Ride with Spouse (5)

____Ride with Friend (6)

____Other (specify)_____ (7)

11. What season(s) are you interested in participating in programs at the YWCA? (col.15-19)
(check all that apply)

____Summer (1)

____Fall (2)

____Winter (3)

____Spring (4)

12. When are you able to participate in programs at the YWCA?
(check all that apply)

____Weekends (1)

____Weekdays (2)

____Either Weekends or Weekdays (3)

13. What time of the day is convenient for you to participate in programs at the YWCA?
(check all that apply)

____Morning (1)

____Lunch Time (2)

____Afternoon (3)

____Evening (4)

14. What would you consider a reasonable fee for educational programs at the YWCA?
(please indicate which of the following categories you would pay for an event at the YWCA)

____Under $5 (1)

____$5 - $9 (2)

____$10 - $14 (3)

____$15 - $19 (4)

____$20 - $24 (5)

____$25 or More (6)

15. What types of activities do you generally participate in at the YWCA?
(check all that apply)

____Recreation (1)

____Classes (2)

____Tours (3)

____Social (4)

____Clubs (5)

____Discussions (6)

16. Do you prefer classes with people of your own age only or classes with younger and older people together? (please check one) (col.20-22)

_____People of my own age primarily (1)

_____Younger and older people together (2)

17. How often do you attend educational or cultural activities? (please check one)

_____Once or twice a year (1)

_____3 - 10 times a year (2)

_____Once a month (3)

_____More than once a month (4)

_____Once a week (5)

_____More than once a week (6)

18. Please check all of the ways you like to learn: (check all that apply)

_____film series (1)

_____lectures (2)

_____group discussions/seminars (3)

_____tours (4)

_____classes (5)

_____workshops (6)

_____clubs/study groups (7)

_____computer (8)

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION. PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED EVERY PAGE.

This questionnaire should be returned to the Women's Resource Center at the Downtown YWCA.

APPENDIX C

An Assessment of Educational Interests of Women Over 60

(c.1-3)
cd.#1(c.4)

We at the YWCA are very excited about programs and activities that could be developed for women at the downtown YWCA. Please look through the following list of possible topics for programs (lectures, workshops, classes, discussion groups, tours, film series, clubs).

If transportation were no problem, the cost affordable, and the time of the program convenient, please indicate your interest in attending these programs by checking (1) I would attend the program listed; or (2) I would not attend the program listed. For each item please check column 1 or 2. This questionnaire should be returned to the Women's Resource Center at the downtown YWCA. Thank you.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL FITNESS	No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
Health Maintenance	18	35	47 (col.5-25)
Weight Watching	13	33	54
Aerobics	16	27	57
Exercise Classes	14	53	33
Yoga	14	20	66
Swimming	8	62	30
Cross Country Skiing	17	14	69
Special Diets	18	17	65
Food Fads	17	6	77
Vitamins	15	23	62
Nutritional Needs Over 60	14	46	40
Biological Aspects of Aging	18	40	42
Menopause	18	3	79
Sexuality: Sex after 60	18	9	73
First Aid	19	28	53
Home Nursing Skills	18	24	58
Relaxation	11	38	51
CPR (Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation)	16	38	46
Other Topics of Interest:	88	4	8
	90	2	8
	91	1	8

FINANCIAL SECURITY	(3) No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Social Security	15	28	57	(col.26-40)
Estates and Wills	12	38	50	
Medical Benefits	13	33	54	
Health Care Costs	14	29	57	
Income Tax	17	30	53	
Insurance Options	16	17	67	
Understanding the Stock Market	15	31	54	
Understanding the Economy	15	30	55	
Investing	15	34	52	
Money Management/Budgeting	17	27	56	
Financial Planning	16	29	55	
Other Topics of Interest:	86	2	12	
	90		10	
	91		9	
	91		9	

SPIRITUALITY		(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Women in Religion	16	22	62	(col.41-49)
Comparative Religions	17	33	50	
Personal Religious Philosophy	17	17	66	
Understanding Theology	18	22	60	
Philosophy	18	27	55	
Ethics and Values	18	28	54	
Other Topics of Interest:	87	2	11	
	90	1	9	
	91		9	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	(3) No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Assertiveness	16	25	59	(col.50-58)
Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills	11	35	54	
Self Defense	15	24	61	
Writing Fiction	12	20	68	
Writing Non-Fiction	11	23	66	
Speed Reading	14	32	54	
Other Topics of Interest:	86	5	9	
	89	3	8	
	91	1	8	

LIFE COPING SKILLS		(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Death, Dying and Bereavement	15	16	69	(col.59-73)
Depression	13	28	59	
Loneliness	14	24	62	
Widowhood	14	16	70	
Relocation	14	19	67	
Stress	9	36	55	
Living with Relatives/Family	14	12	74	
Developing New Friends	11	40	49	
Personal Illness and Disease	13	23	64	
Dealing with Illness and Disease of Others	16	19	65	
Handling Legal Matters	10	40	50	
Other Topics of Interest:	88	2	10	
	90		10	
	90		10	
	90		10	

MEDICAL CONCERNS	(3) No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Medical Problems Over 60	18	33	49	(col.73-8
Your Doctor and You	19	24	57	
Chemical Abuse	22	4	74	
Foot Care	19	34	47	
Heart Disease	19	24	57	
Cancer	23	20	57	
Hypertension	20	26	54	
Medications	21	22	57	(c.1
Is It Aging or Disease?	21	31	48	cd.#2(c.5
Other Topics of Interest:	88	5	7	
	93		7	
	93		7	

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT		(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Home Safety	20	15	65	(col.9-14
Interior Decorating	20	23	57	
Winterizing Your Home	19	16	65	
Maintenance and Home Repairs	18	22	60	
Yard Maintenance	21	14	65	
Indoor Plants	19	34	47	
Cooking for One or Two	18	42	40	
Other Topics of Interest:	92	1	7	
	93		7	
	93		7	

CONSUMER COMPETENCE	(3) No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
			(col.19-3
Buying and Selling a Home	15	19	66
Automobile Maintenance	15	23	62
Small Appliance Maintenance	15	22	63
Quacks, Frauds and Con Artists	18	15	67
Housing Options	16	20	64
Eating Well for Less	16	34	50
Efficient Energy Use	18	20	62
Funeral Arrangements	16	16	68
Utilizing Social Services	17	30	53
Selecting a Long-Term Care Facility	15	30	55
Other Topics of Interest:	92	1	7
	93		7
	93		7

CAREER RELATED TOPICS	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend
		(col.32-4
Careers in Retirement 14	31	55
Preparing for Retirement 15	14	71
Work Opportunities 17	23	60
Obtaining a Job 17	15	68
How to Run a Small Business 15	12	73
Volunteer Opportunities 15	32	52
Advocacy Training 17	12	71
Leadership Training 16	15	69
Other Topics of Interest: 92	1	7
93		7
93		7

ART	(3) No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Art Appreciation	16	35	49	(col. 43-53)
Art History	18	24	58	
Drawing/Sketching	16	31	53	
Water Color	16	31	53	
Sculpture	17	12	71	
Oil Painting	17	22	61	
Fabric Art	21	18	61	
Tours of Art Museums	18	40	42	
Other Topics of Interest:	91	2	7	
	92	1	7	
	93		7	

MUSIC		(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Music Appreciation	17	39	44	(col. 54-64)
Trips to Concerts	18	42	40	
Music Instrument Lessons (Specify_____)	19	17	64	
Voice Lessons	19	7	74	
Contemporary Music	20	14	66	
Classical Music	17	31	52	
Opera	18	29	53	
Sing-a-longs	18	21	61	
Community Chorus	18	17	65	
Community Band/Orchestra	19	8	73	
Other Topics of Interest:	93		7	
	93		7	
	93		7	

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN	(3) No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend	
Third World Countries	15	26	59	(col.67-80)
Current Events	14	42	44	
Understanding Computers	15	38	47	
Computers in the Home	15	29	56	
Ecology	16	22	62	
Solar Energy	17	20	63	
Nuclear Energy	17	13	70	
National Defense and Security	16	16	69	
National Political Issues	15	29	56	
International Political Issues	15	31	54	
Local and State Issues	16	37	47	
The Economy	16	24	60	
Racial/Ethnic Issues	17	19	64	
Women and Public Leadership	17	23	60	
You and Your Future	17	30	70	(c. cd.#3(c.
Human Abuse	17	15	68	
Aging: Myths and Stereotypes	17	25	58	(c.5-12)
Public Policy and Aging	17	27	56	
Intergenerational Issues	17	17	66	
Other Topics of Interest:	91		9	
	91		9	
	91		9	

Although the YWCA does not typically offer programs leading to a high school diploma or college degrees, the YWCA staff would be happy to refer you to convenient locations where you can pursue these interests. Please check whether or not you are interested in this type of information: (col. 13)

6 Yes, I am interested in this information

72 No, I am not interested in this information

22 No Response

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HOBBIES	(3) No Response	(1) I would attend	(2) I would not attend (col. 14-41)
Antiques	16	30	54
Needlework	14	31	55
Knitting/Crocheting	15	38	47
Quilting	18	27	55
Weaving	17	20	63
Jewelry Making	19	11	70
Photography	17	25	58
Woodworking	19	10	71
Furniture Refinishing	19	21	60
Stamp Collecting	21	5	74
Coin Collecting	18	9	73
Flower Arranging	18	31	51
Gardening	20	20	60
Bird Watching	19	28	53
Gourmet Cooking	18	35	47
Ethnic Cooking	19	21	60
Ceramics/Pottery	19	15	66
Astrology	20	15	65
Travel	15	48	37
Bowling	18	12	70
Dancing (Specify_____)	20	19	61
Backgammon	20	18	62
Bridge	15	34	51
Chess	19	8	73
Other Card Games (Specify_____)	39	14	47
Other Topics of Interest:	86	7	7
_____	91	2	7
_____	92	1	7

Page 8 →

Please complete the following information for our use in program planning.
Any information on this form will be kept confidential.

1. What is your present age? (please check one) (col.5-9)

62 Under 60 (1)

28 60 - 69 (2)

10 70 - 79 (3)

____ 80+ (4)

2. Sex:

100 Female (1)

____ Male (2)

3. Race:

98 Caucasian (1)

____ Black (2)

____ Hispanic (3)

____ Oriental (4)

1 American Indian (5)

1 Other (specify)_____ (6)

4. What is your marital status?

38 Married (1)

28 Widowed (2)

34 Single (3)

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

6 Grade School (1)

15 High School Graduate or GED (2)

41 Some College/Vocational School (3)

22 College Degree (4)

13 Professional/Graduate Degree (5)

3 Other Certificate (6)

6. Are you currently working outside the home for pay?

19 Yes (1)

70 No (2)

10 No Response

7. Are you currently a YWCA volunteer?

7 Yes (1)

85 No (2)

8 No Response

If no, are you interested in being a volunteer?

18 Yes (3)

60 No (4)

22 No Response

8. How often do you participate in activities at the YWCA? (please check one)

22 Once or twice a year (1)

10 3 - 10 times a year (2)

7 Once a month (3)

14 More than once a month (4)

15 Once a week (5)

17 More than once a week (6)

15 No Response

9. How far do you live from the YWCA? (please estimate and check one)

11 Less than 1 mile (1)

16 1 - 2 miles (2)

17 3 - 4 miles (3)

27 5 - 6 miles (4)

21 over 6 miles (5)

8 No Response

10. What is your principal means of transportation? (please check one)

34 Drive (1)

53 Bus (2)

5 Taxi (3)

14 Walk (4)

4 Ride with Spouse (5)

2 Ride with Friend (6)

____ Other (specify)_____ (7)

7 No Response

11. What season(s) are you interested in participating in programs at the YWCA? (col.15-19)
(check all that apply)

41 Summer (1)

78 Fall (2)

59 Winter (3)

68 Spring (4)

16 No Response

12. When are you able to participate in programs at the YWCA?
(check all that apply)

9 Weekends (1)

71 Weekdays (2)

20 Either Weekends or Weekdays (3)

13 No Response

13. What time of the day is convenient for you to participate in programs at the YWCA?
(check all that apply)

70 Morning (1)

32 Lunch Time (2)

49 Afternoon (3)

18 Evening (4)

14 No Response

14. What would you consider a reasonable fee for educational programs at the YWCA?
(please indicate which of the following categories you would pay for an event at the YWCA)

14 Under $5 (1)

21 $5 - $9 (2)

32 $10 - $14 (3)

4 $15 - $19 (4)

4 $20 - $24 (5)

$25 or More (6)

24 No Response

15. What types of activities do you generally participate in at the YWCA?
(check all that apply)

50 Recreation (1)

33 Classes (2)

8 Tours (3)

14 Social (4)

17 Clubs (5)

8 Discussions (6)

15 No Response

16. Do you prefer classes with people of your own age only or classes with younger and older people together? (please check one) (col.20-22)

21 People of my own age primarily (1)

70 Younger and older people together (2)

9 No Response

17. How often do you attend educational or cultural activities? (please check one)

16 Once or twice a year (1)

22 3 - 10 times a year (2)

13 Once a month (3)

14 More than once a month (4)

13 Once a week (5)

6 More than once a week (6)

16 No Response

18. Please check all of the ways you like to learn: (check all that apply)

49 film series (1)

62 lectures (2)

48 group discussions/seminars (3)

40 tours (4)

64 classes (5)

39 workshops (6)

25 clubs/study groups (7)

3 computer (8)

9 No Response

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION. PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED EVERY PAGE.

This questionnaire should be returned to the Women's Resource Center at the Downtown YWCA.

APPENDIX D

the YWCA Minneapolis Area / 1130 Nicollet Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota / 55403
telephone / (612) 332-0501

May 26, 1982

Dear Ms. _____,

We at the YWCA need your help. The YWCA has decided that one of the important new services it can offer its members is a program designed especially for women 60 years of age and older. We want to provide the courses, workshops, clubs and other kinds of activities that you are interested in. This letter is an invitation to you to participate in a study of your educational interests regarding programs at the downtown YWCA. This study is being conducted by Shirley De Jong, a University of Minnesota Graduate student. Shirley is working on her Master of Arts Degree in Adult Education and is interested in educational programming for women.

As a participant in this study, the only request made of you will be to complete a questionnaire. Any information that is obtained in this study will be confidential and anonymous. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you have any questions about this study, I will be happy to answer them. Please feel free to call me at the number below.

We are aware that many of you use the YWCA facilities for various activities, and as a way of economizing we are asking if you would please complete a questionnaire on your next visit to the YWCA. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes of you time to complete. Please call Sandy Lofgren in the Women's Resource Center at 332-0501, extension 153 between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to inform her when you will be visiting the YWCA and will be able to complete the questionnaire.

If we haven't heard from you by June 11, 1982, we will be mailing you a questionnaire along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your convenience in returning it to the YWCA. We invite and encourage your participation in this study so that we can better plan programs and activities for you.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Madery	Shirley De Jong	348-6967 (work)
Program Director	YWCA Intern	824-3505 (home)

APPENDIX E

the YWCA Urban Center / 1130 Nicollet Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota / 55403
telephone / 332-0501

A REMINDER FROM THE YWCA:

June 14, 1982

Dear YWCA Member,

As you recall from my letter which was sent to you the first of June, I am conducting a study of educational interests of women 60 and over to assist the YWCA in planning better programs.

I am doing this research as part of my graduate work at the University of Minnesota. I am working on my Master's Degree in Adult Education and am interested in planning programs for women. This project will complete my graduate work at the University.

Enclosed is an Assessment of Educational Interests of Women Over 60 Questionnaire. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to the YWCA as soon as possible in the stamped, addressed envelope.

I sincerely appreciate your taking the time to complete and return the questionnaire, which will assist the YWCA in planning programs for women and help me to complete my study for graduate school.

Again, please call me if you have any questions at 348-6967 (work), or 824-3505 (home).

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Shirley De Jong

Shirley De Jong
YWCA Intern

APPENDIX F

Additional Interests Noted by Respondents

Health and Physical Fitness Category

Foods that fight cholesterol
Vitamins that keep you going and healthy without medications
Personal health - care of skin, feet, teeth
Aerobics - geared to 50 and over
Pain erasure
Bonnie Prudden Methodology and other developing ideas in health and physical fitness

Financial Security Category

Real estate
Finding certified appraisers
Marketing personal items such as rare books, prints, collector's objects, paintings, jewelery, etc.

Spirituality Category

Change in ethics and values
Bible as literature
Holy land - architecture, history

Personal Development Category

Letter writing
Plays and dramatics
Book discussions (classic and contemporary)

Life Coping Skills Category

Relationships with adults and grandchildren
How to use my coping skills which women our age have developed to collaborate with and enhance the coping skills of other women
How to initiate and maintain a support group

Medical Concerns

Genetics
Tooth care

Consumer Competence Category

How to deal with and look at your current wardrobe positively and shop at thrift shops with results that are stylish and good for you -- alterations and makeovers

Career Related Topics Category

Career clinic services custom-tailored to women over 60

Music Category

Piano lessons
Organ lessons
Classes oriented and held prior to opera week

Hobbies Category

Dancing - ballroom, waltz, fox trot, polka, folk
Cards - 500, 7-up, bingo, Uno
Calligraphy
Writing childrens' stories
Genealogy
Scrabble

APPENDIX G

Comments from Respondents

Scheduling/Facilities

Interested in class times 9:30-2:30 to avoid bus rush hour fares.
Interested in swimming if water were warmer.

Convenience/Served by Other Programs

"Have not renewed my membership. I live in Wayzata and I find the parking in Minneapolis an obstacle. I have enjoyed the health facilities, but can use the YMCA out here more easily. In planning Senior Citizen activities please consider two quite different groups -- young old (60-70) and old old."

"I think your survey is interesting and thoughfully worked out, however because of my living in the Minnetonka area it is unrealistic for me to fill in the questions. Through the Minnetonka Art Center, a cooperative church program and other opportunities here I simply would not take part in downtown YWCA activities."

"I am sorry I cannot be helpful to you in your survey. At the present time my interests are well served by the community in which I live (Bloomington). I am a long time member of the YWCA and will continue to be. But I see my role as supportive, rather than that of a participant. Good luck in your survey."

"I live in Minnetonka and it is too far to go to the YWCA. I do come in to play bridge and take painting classes. I am not interested in anything else."

Support for YWCA

"I contribute to the YWCA because I approve of their program. I did not complete all of this form because at this time I do not plan to participate in any programs. On rare occasions I have attended a meeting. Best wishes in your planning."

Time Constraint

"Since I am employed full-time in a demanding job, I do not have leisure time for YWCA activities. After my retirement, I might respond quite differently to this questionnaire.

Age/Health Barriers (Transportation)

"I am returning the enclosed questionnaire without any checks. It looks very interesting but I am 96 years old and could not attend any of the classes as I would have no means of transportation. I also have poor eyesight and have arthritis."

"I have given book talks and have been a regular attendant at the Book Talk Club meetings for a number of years. Being 87 years old I have some of the frailties of people my age and therefore am not likely to take up more activities than my present ones."

"I am not a very active person because of my age and health. I enjoy concerts at Orchestra Hall and I enjoy a game of bridge. I attend church regularly."

"At my age I am not caring about going far from home. I am a poor resource of any help for you. I am in one of the finest Masonic Homes in the U.S."

Older Women as Resources for Others

"How about asking older women what they can do and contribute to -- as versus asking what they want?"